



An MPDMedia Literary Anthology



*Sunflowers in Ukraine (Panoramio)*, by Wolodymyr Lavrynenko

## Ukrainian-American Actors and Musicians

Michael Bolton – pop ballad singer  
Neko Case – singer, songwriter  
Matt Czuchry – actor, co-star of *The Good Wife*  
Bob Dylan – singer-songwriter  
George Dzundza – television actor  
Erika Eleniak – actress, father is of Ukrainian descent  
Jackie Evancho – classical crossover singer  
Bill Evans – jazz musician and composer

Vera and Taissa Farmiga – actresses  
Stan Getz - jazz saxophonist and band leader  
John Hodiak – actor, Lifeboat, Two Smart People  
Dustin Hoffman -- 2-time Oscar-winner  
Vladimir Horowitz – Ukrainian pianist  
Mila Kunis – actress and voice actress, Ukrainian  
Walter Matthau – actor, Oscar-winner  
Leonard Nimoy – actor, Spock on Star Trek  
Jack Palance – actor, Oscar-winner  
Lizabeth Scott – film noir actress, second-generation Ukrainian  
Steven Tyler – singer-songwriter, frontman for Aerosmith  
Zoë Wanamaker – stage actress, father of Ukrainian extraction  
Natalie Wood – actress, Oscar-nominee

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Ukrainian\\_Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Ukrainian_Americans)

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AMBROSE BIERCE AS HE REALLY WAS  
An Intimate Account of His Life and Death  
By Adolphe De Castro  
The American Parade - 1926

PEOPLE is as great as its literature. This has been said before, but it will not hurt to repeat it. Once in a while, a people strikes a balance of its literary "business" and the makers thereof. Without mental reservations, it says of one or another :

" This was a man !"

Ambrose Bierce undoubtedly was the master craftsman in literary art of his day. He wrought in an inimitable style the satire that required purely objective treatment and invented cutting invective in verse the meter of which has the rhythm of a veritable danse du diable. Bierce employed this sort of expression when fancy urged him to lash a sinner. Thoughts of mercy were as distasteful to him as a mess of herbs to a tiger. Of course, he knew that he afforded amusement to many nude souls by his attacks against the soilure of others. But he grinned with satisfaction to know that those nude souls wondered when their own turns would come and trembled even as they smiled .

Survivors of a bygone day have lately revived a " Bierce cult," not so much for the sake of what he wrote as for what he is

supposed to have been. Permit me to tell the story in brief of Bierce as I knew him rather intimately since 1886, and of his death in Mexico.

When I first met Bierce, I had been in San Francisco about two years, practising dentistry and endeavoring to write in the English language. Fortunately for my purpose, I became acquainted with Henry D. Bigelow - generally called "Petey" Bigelow — a real artist as a reporter and feature writer on the San Francisco Examiner.

Petey had introduced me to Robert Louis Stevenson, whom he greatly resembled physically. But as I had the merest bowing acquaintance with English literature, the name of the great Scotsman meant scarcely more to me than that of an Englishman who "wrote," was in delicate health and was exceedingly pleasant. I even had the temerity to show Robert Louis Stevenson one of my short stories, translated from my own German, and the dear, wonderful fellow graciously praised it as a very clever idea. "As Petey had spoken enthusiastically of "Mr. Bierce," whom he pronounced a marvelous genius, I begged him to bring Bierce to my office, which was already a rendezvous for a number of good fellows when they wanted a smoke, a drink and plenty of talk on many subjects.

Petey brought Bierce, and before long we were deep in conversation. Let me qualify this statement. The conversation was carried on by Bierce and Bigelow, with occasional remarks directed at me. I spoke with extreme diffidence — the diffidence of a person whose trousers have ripped and who sidles along, so as not to show his back to the audience. Dropping the metaphor, I will say that I made my remarks mostly with nouns, fearing to employ conjunctions, adverbs, adjectives or even verbs, lest Bierce note my imperfect mastery of English. If Ambrose Bierce felt amused at my speech, he failed to show it; although once, when I said "idiocity" for idiocy, he stopped and looked at me pensively.

"Excellent word," Idiocity. Ought to be in the dictionary.

But it is not, and the world will have to worry along with idiocy," he declared.

Physically, Ambrose Bierce lived up to my exuberant imagination of the literary tyrant. He was then near fifty years of age, easily six feet tall, broad-chested and lean bodied. His military shoulders were surmounted by a head which was beautiful and awe-inspiring. It was a fine, well-made head with a melange of yellow-white hair of medium length which ran in all directions in curly wilfulness. His eyes, blue like sheer

lightning, deep set and rather small, were overhung by long, shaggy, yellow brows, between which was " the thinker's furrow . " His nose was straight, finely nostriled and fairly right angular. A well- turned mustache covered a large, generous mouth with full lips and a strong chin that had the suspicion of a cleft. He had the red coloring of what is now called the Nordic type. After the first visit, I saw a great deal of Bierce. My " sidling " in adjectives and prepositions gradually vanished. I read much under Bierce's guidance, and above all I read Bierce. I delighted in his incisive remarks, in the cleverness of his versification, in the strength and beauty of his epigrams and the iridescent light shafts with which he bewildered his assailants. Sometimes an adversary got under his guard , and then he'd spit like a cat. One such fencing foe was Frank Pixley, the editor of the San Francisco Argonaut, who wielded a wicked pen himself and of whom Bierce used to say :  
" If the fellow had had an education, he would have become dangerous ! " Which was great praise from Bierce. When those two fighters were at it , literature of a superior sort was produced, which verified the talmudic adage that " the jealousy of authors begets learning." Pixley did not have the grace, the savoir faire, of Bierce, but he could lambast " the Pope's Irish, " as he called the Catholics, in most picturesque terms, and when he mentioned Bierce the ink in the pot sizzled.

Bierce retorted with epigrams, such as the one in which he cautions the heavy-booted muleteer, walking over Frank Pixley's grave to " step lightly, stranger, everywhere but here. "  
Inexorable in his attacks upon foes, he sometimes was tender with a friend — particularly when the friend was dead. He wrote of Ralph Smith :  
Light lie the earth upon his dear dead heart,  
And dreams disturb him never.  
Yet he showed little of " the gleam of the Galilean , " as one of his admirers expressed it, in speaking of Ralph Smith and others while they were in the flesh . " They may become backsliders, and I would have to use the lash , " he would tell me. I think of him as the American Heine ; for like the great German poet, he planted asphodel in the dust of the literary incompetents he had slain .  
Bierce and myself gradually assumed the relationship of master and pupil — with limitations, of course. He was busy with his writing, and I with the double task of attending to my pro

fessional duties and translating from many languages to sharpen my pen for English .

In 1888, Bierce had gone to Howell Mountain, Napa County, where he was singularly free from the asthma that tormented him so. Yielding to a temptation against which I had fought for a long time, I sent him a composition of mine which I believed , in my simplicity, to be blank verse . I received the "poem " back with a letter — the first handwriting of Bierce I had ever seen-in which he told me that the lines gave evidence of a poetic nature, but poetry in the accepted sense, and particularly blank verse, they were not. If I cared , though , to come to Howell Mountain, he would talk the matter over with me.

I had been overworking, and I do not exaggerate when I state that the thrill of receiving that invitation from Bierce was almost fatal to my weakened system . I telegraphed my acceptance, and on my arrival the biblical elder brother could not have manifested greater tenderness than Bierce showed me. He ordered me to take a shower, and — mirabile dictu-he personally gave me an alcohol rub, after he had seen how unhandy I was in the matter. He then put me to sleep .

During the next few days, I became a silent, spell - bound listener when Bierce talked . He was not only very eloquent, but he had a strong, singing quality in his voice, and I drank in his speech like precious nectar.

He would stop of a sudden and demand why I was silent. He would ask about my work . He would show especial delight in what I told him with reference to Semitic or Russian literature. He never could get enough of Mitchkievitch ( It is spelled differently in Polish , but this is the way to pronounce it ) and my renditions of Heine gave him great pleasure. He studiously corrected my literary errors. His information regarding English blank verse was so elucidating that I have never since attempted the form .

But Bierce instructed me in matters other than the merely literary, and his sentiments were in complete contradiction to his personal kindness to me. His sweeping assertion that " nothing matters " shocked me at first, then slightly amused me. He had probably read too much Schopenhauer - Nietzsche was not in vogue then I told myself, and was willing to let it go at that. However, Bierce would not let it go at that. He wanted me to digest the fact that nothing mattered. It was not asserted with the gentle, philosophic intent of Emerson that " nothing is new, nothing's true and nothing matters." Bierce's

grim dictum included the affections , the world's travail , its aspirations , its hopes, its beliefs , its hates and its loves .

" Some things matter our friendship , for instance," I said .

" No, not even that . You are a sort of buffer. I can tell you what I will not put on paper. The skull here ," he said , pointing to a hideously grinning skull , on the frontal of which Bierce had written ' One of my forgiven ' , " has served the purpose for some time. But it does not snap its eyes as you do. It has none to snap, but the point is the same — nothing matters."

" And love ? " I asked.

" Satiety makes it immaterial."

" And children ?" I inquired.

" Calves or companions. I don't blame the cuckoo hen for laying her eggs in other birds' nests . Wise bird the cuckoo. Take my word for it ," he replied.

" And honor ?" I persisted.

" The shadow of a shadow ; the stuff fools' crowns are made of. "

" And patriotism and civic righteousness ?"

" Badges of fools and crooks Johnson said it in more words, but it amounts to the same thing," he told me.

" And life and suffering and death ? Do none of these count in the scheme of humanity ?" I pleaded.

" They matter much to story writers. Personally I think there is nothing in death to seek or to fear. It is no more than life, and a good deal easier to maintain. One cannot die while alive, and when dead one does not know. So what's the hardship ? "

No wonder they called him, " Bitter Bierce!"

As the years passed I became more and more his " buffer" ; and it often came to me that Jesus was right when he told the Pharisees that they take the beam from their own eye before they would remove the mote from that of their fellowman , or words to that effect. There was absolutely no justice in his treatment of women, particularly those who refused to come under his personal sway. He branded one of the sweetest singers of California " an indecent liar and drunkard ," simply because she had refused to receive him.

When I read this in Bierce's weekly " Prattle," I asked him if there were such a thing as " a decent liar. " His answer was characteristic, " To hit a villain , one may lie decently. " He soon after proved it to me. He had attacked a person, who believed the attack to have been inspired by me and had written Bierce so . Thereupon, Bierce not only published the man's

letter and cut his character to shreds, but he wrote about me so loftily and exaggeratedly that I was constrained to ask him why he did it.

"To make his smart the keener," was Bierce's reply.

"Ah, then this is what you understand by decent lying?" I asked him.

He did not deem my question worth answering, and demanded to see the installment of *Oriental Aphorisms* I was then preparing for the *Overland Monthly* which Bierce did not like.

After he had read the article he curtly remarked that it was too damned good for the "*Warmed-Overland*."

Bierce was not an academically educated man.

however, an assiduous reader of *Brewer's Phrase and Fable* from which he got his apt classical references. He had a rare contempt for all the old classics, and read extracts to steal their thunder, as he told me. He read Poe — I am quoting— "to avoid repetition and forestall comparison." He read Mark Twain, "to sharpen lethiferous wit against bovine humor." In these confidences he always made acrid sport of his literary friends.

Jimmy Tufts, Bierce's worshiper and the dearest soul I have known, he named "a carrier of water and hewer of wood."

Tufts had more than once helped put over a Biercean screed which the gentle and conservative managing editor, Henderson, would have blue-penciled or pigeon-holed.

Joaquin Miller, the Poet of the Sierras, was characterized "a sot, addicted to the drinking of the vilest rotgut, a fair poet but an abominable prose writer."

There are many persons living who believe that they enjoyed Bierce's friendship, but of whom the "buffer" heard much that was bitter. His friends were no more immune from attack than his enemies. He was a man to carry a grudge and spit his venom when least expected.

During the years in which he hurled his weekly shafts against pigmies, or trained a cannon on gnats, the readers of the *San Francisco Examiner* asked themselves the cause of Bierce's bitterness. Few could answer the question, but the "buffer" was of the few. There probably was one other, namely, William Randolph Hearst. But he was sure not to tell. Bierce undoubtedly brought more readers to the *Examiner* than all the other features combined, and yet Bierce received for his work that would today bring him a princely income— thirty five dollars a week!

Now, why did Bierce labor for such a beggarly wage? Why did Bierce hate Billy Hearst with an inveterate hatred? Why,

when Hearst wrote him a letter, did Bierce throw the letter on the floor and stamp on it ? I witnessed this twice. Even in later years, Bierce wrote me that he was “ nothing but a cog in Mr. Hearst's machinery.” ( The letter lies before me now . )

There are answers to all these questions. Bierce had been writing for the San Francisco Chronicle, then owned by Michael de Young, a Jew with an Irish - Catholic domestic establishment. De Young was an orthodox Jew when it came to circumcising the pay of his employees. Bierce did not like de Young ; but necessity compelled him, and expediency counseled patience. He hoped to enter the service of the Southern Pacific Railway in a higher capacity than W. C. Morrow , also a writer, who was a desk man in the " S. P.'s" offices. Bierce despised such low station . He submitted a plan to Senator Stanford, Vice- President of the railroad, by which the Company was to create the post of “ General Counselor” at a salary of \$ 25,000 a year. The Senator, who was a very progressive man, took the matter under advisement. However, C. P. Huntington knew no sentiment other than the music of his rolling stock, and he rejected the proposition.

William Randolph Hearst had just received the Evening Examiner as a birthday present from his indulgent father, who told him to make something of the paper and of himself. Hearst changed the Examiner to a morning paper, engaged the best talent he could find, and having in all probability heard of the failure of the Bierce deal with the railroad, he offered Bierce the post of a free lance on the Examiner. Hearst wanted a whip with which to lash the Republican Senator Stanford, and to wield against all and sundry who might be displeasing to him. Bierce, who had been writing under the pen -name of " The Town-Crier," was just the man for the work. Hearst sent Bierce a note, which did not find him at home. He was then returning, sadly disappointed, from the Southern Pacific's offices and he was going to collect the space rate for a little article he had written for the Chronicle.

He found Mike de Young playing the role of cashier. Bierce put in a slip, on which was written the amount coming to him as he had received it from the editor. But de Young found that there was a difference in his own favor of " thirteen and three -quarter cents." He shoved out four silver dollars, asking Bierce to give him the change. Bierce took the money and threw it in Mike de Young's face and “ got his blood , anyhow , " as he told me.

Bierce, almost hopeless, went to his lodging and found the



Hearst note. He did not whoop, for he hated the world . But he was ready to accept the post offered to him. Now he had a chance to get even with “ the thieves of the railroad ,” and he could at his leisure split the nerves of Mike de Young. This last he did in verse that scintillated and seared . Read The Lifted Finger and see the “ bug in amber” that Bierce made of de Young.

Bierce did not wait until one sinned publicly or “ exposed his mental vacuity ” in the press. He voided his rheum upon the beards of all . He attacked the editors of other papers. If any one, to curry favor, sent him an effusion, he would print the worst part of it and put that person in the pillory. Few dared to reply to him. It is no overstatement to say that a great dread , mixed with grim satisfaction on the part of some, seized the community.

Yet Bierce himself was the prey of a gnawing grief. He believed in himself. He believed that he was of a mental stature to stand side by side with Horace, Juvenal and Dean Swift. He wanted to be so recognized by future generations, and he saw no way of realizing his one desire. His quotidian writing, his weekly “ Prattle,” his letters — and he wrote thousands of them -were all ephemeral. The only way to assure immortality, he felt, was to achieve a great book between covers. He had written much and brilliantly in London under the name of “ Dod Grile.” He had received recognition from W. E. Gladstone. Then circumstances had compelled him to return to the United States and enter the field of hack writers at so much a line. He easily stood forth as the greatest, even in such a galaxy of good writers as California then had ; but it was a beggarly existence at best, and no promise of eternal fame. He sent his collected stories to every publisher in the country, but one after another refused to issue them. Then he sent out his verses to those lusty fellows “ who drank wine from the skulls of authors.” as Bierce said of the publishers. Again the rounds were made, and the poetry came back. He went so far as to separate the sheep from the goats; he submitted the milder ones, to no avail.

With each rejection , Bierce grew livid . He ground his teeth and swore at the “ predatory wretches.” He humbled himself to the point of asking William Randolph Hearst to publish his verses ; but Hearst, too, refused. When E. L. G. Steele, an Englishman, magnanimously defrayed the cost of printing a volume of short stories, Bierce reviled the man to the “ buffer” :

" Who cares for prose ? What lesson have I taught in my stories ?  
None at all. It is my poetry that ought to go out in  
book form , and the idiot thinks he has done me a favor !"  
My heart was wrung for his sake. This greatest of writers  
had poured out his grief and his bitterness to me, and I was  
helpless to do anything ! I was then vacationing at Howell Mountain,  
and I often heard his complaints. On my return to  
San Francisco, I went to see Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst and begged  
her to aid in the publication of Bierce's verses. " It is not advisable  
to perpetuate a curse between covers," said the wonderfully  
wise woman. It was the truth, but I felt sad beyond  
expression .

When I saw Bierce again I promised him I would publish  
his book if I lived. I knew nothing then of publishing. But  
when was true friendship lacking in courage ? We were then in  
the blessed year 1889 and I would have given my life for  
Ambrose Bierce.

That same year I read a story in a German Magazine entitled  
The Monk of Berchtesgaden . It was from the pen of  
Professor Richard Voss. It purported to be the diary of a  
monk, who on his transference to another monastery together  
with two other monks, passes a field in which is a gallows with  
a man hanging. The vultures gather to feast corpse, and  
the young and beautiful daughter of the hangman seeks to chase  
the birds of prey. Ambrosius, the hero of the story, falls in  
love with the girl . He shows his affection in many ways. His  
secret is discovered not only by the prior but also by a young  
fellow , a daring seducer, who wants to have his will of the  
girl. The monk becomes jealous, and in a fit of insane rage he  
kills the girl and is hanged.

Nothing I had ever read, not even The Scarlet Letter, by Hawthorne,  
had so gripped me. It was beautiful beyond the  
telling. The medieval, monkish style of the narrative made it  
doubly attractive, and it was just long enough — or short  
enough to be right.

Not until I had translated the story into English did I be-  
come conscious of the fact that it would never do. for American  
readers, twenty- five per cent of whom were Catholics and whom  
this story would keenly offend.

I had written on the title page the exact origin of the story.  
For the time being, there was not the least thought in my mind  
of cabbaging the tale in any shape form or manner. But I  
was keenly conscious that I must cut the literary cloth to suit  
the American wearer or else not do it at all . I therefore set

about to make changes, slight indeed, yet in such a way as to enable me “ to put it over. ” I wrote a version, almost exactly like the original, yet with a subtle change here and there that palliated the situation, but left the tragic element intact.

This done, I deliberately wrote another story, not omitting a jot or tittle from the central thought, only instead of being a monk, Ambrosius was a novice, intended for the Church through his own father's grief at the loss of the wife he adored. The girl was a changeling, and through a series of vicissitudes they finally won to a perfect state of happiness.

I had no choice between the two. My own story was enhanced by the tragic power of the original. Whatever stylistic blemishes or “ Germanisms ” adhered to my translation or to the rendition, could , I thought, be readily overcome by any person who pretended to write good English .

Accordingly, a Miss von Loevenfels was engaged to copy the story and was requested to eliminate all Germanisms. But the young lady, being German and the daughter of a German scientist, fell under the spell of the German and failed in what I desired to accomplish. A Dr. Gustave Glaser, graduate of Cambridge University, England, and writer for the San Francisco News Letter, copied the story, pocketed his fee , but did not change the result.

The impasse was doubly disheartening for the reason that I could trust none of the hack -writers and had not the courage to show the story to Bierce. His asthma prevented him from doing any lengthy writing, and he had often told me that he hated the long story. The manuscripts, therefore, reposed in my desk to be looked at occasionally. I could not submit them to a publisher because I did not want to be laughed out of the literary field as a poor translator.

One day a mutual friend of Bierce and myself - a stock broker by the name of Charles Kaufman — came to my office and picked up the manuscript. He laid it down only after he had read the last line.

" I wonder," he said at length, “ how much you added to the work of the German ? ”

“ Very little in this copy, but much in my own conception of how the ending ought to be for American readers,” and I showed him the other copy , and also the German original .

" I like the tragic best. Has Bierce seen the story ? ” he asked .

" I would not molest Bierce with my writings,” I replied .

“ Nonsense. Bierce ought to read the story,” he said and went away

The following day Bierce came to my office .

" Kaufman told me you had written a good story. Let me see it," he demanded.

I gave him the two manuscripts and he took them home to read. A day or two after Bierce returned to my office, slammed the manuscripts on my desk and said :

" The tragic rendition is the better. This story will give you a good slice of reputation in the literary world . "

" You don't say, " I remarked, and bade him be seated and tell me more.

" And so, you damned sneak, you would have kept this story from me?" he cried, and his blue eyes shot glints of lightning from underneath his shaggy brows.

To say that his remark made me happy is to express it mildly.

In a stride I was by his side.

" Dear, great Heathen Master, you do not for a moment think that I would have kept this from you . I feared to molest you," I told him, the tears running down my cheeks.

Of course, he was pleased and, putting his arm over my shoulders, he accepted a drink and entered upon the question of publication.

" I would not think of publishing the story with the German isms in it , " I protested .

" That's precisely what I intend to pencil," he told me

" It will not do. You can no more escape the interest in the story than I or the others, and this very interest will make you a poor proof reader," I boldly told him .

" I plead guilty to the charge, " he said .

" The only way to overcome it, is to copy it verbatim. When you actually copy the thing, your hand will not write a word that your taste will not confirm . Copy it , " I pleaded.

" It is a luxury I cannot afford . If I do not write for the Examiner, I don't eat," he said, and I am quoting his exact words.

" I will give you fifty dollars a week, providing it does not exceed four weeks, for copying the story ; and I will give you an interest in the proceeds in whatever form the story is printed, providing again that you sign your name along with mine."

To this he consented . We at once went to our friend Kauf man, who was a notary public. There Bierce himself wrote the contract in which he agreed to revise the story entitled The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter. He then and there also received the two hundred dollars cash . Each one got a copy

of the paper ( mine, alas, was burned in the San Francisco fire, but Bierce's copy certainly must be extant among his papers ), and I at least, went home happy as a lark. The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter would get the touch of a master hand. It was finally finished in the strong, precise hand of Bierce. The revision, although slight, was nevertheless subtle and effective and the story was published in the Sunday Examiner of San Francisco. The prefatory note which set forth the exact origin of the story was signed by myself and Bierce — the three words are underscored to show that my name preceded that of Bierce in the first publication . Later, a publisher demanded that Bierce's name — as the better known - precede mine, and I reluctantly consented.

It was only after the Chicago publisher had failed and an other offered to issue the story providing I would change the title to Benedicta, that Bierce and I broke. In a paragraph which attacked the proposed publisher in scathing invective, he wrote, " The story as it stands, I wrote myself."

When I called him to account, he abused me most picturesquely, not because I told him that he had lied, but because of the Hadrianic principle : " No one shall tell me how to destroy mine enemies !" The presumptuous publisher was his " enemy" and deserved annihilation.

Bierce always wanted the last word in an argument. He wanted to be right, though he were obviously wrong. He abused me, and desired to appear the injured party . Even when I not only published his verses, but through his " friendly advice" lost thousands of dollars, he heaped maledictions on my devoted head and warned our mutual friends to have nothing to do with me. In later years, when we had " made up , " I once asked him why he had said such horrible things about me. " To forestall anything you might say about me, " was his answer.

This glimpse of my association with Bierce is but a single page in the history. A book of many hundred pages might be written about the man, his work, his character or lack of character. The checkered pattern of our friendship included many side issues in which men and measures , nationally and internationally known, were involved. But all this will die with I was not a lamb myself. Down- at- the- heel scribes have more than once importuned me to give them details about Bierce's life, but I have always refused. One may defend his rights even against the King, but one need not be a tattle- tale. If Bierce made me his " buffer " in my youth, he was perhaps quite certain that he could trust me. And, his faults apart, I

still say that no other writer of his times possessed so wonderful a vehicle of expression, or wielded a wit so keen and cruel, as Ambrose Bierce.

With my hand on my heart, I say that it is my firm conviction, based upon much reading of the world's literature, that since the best period of remote antiquity, the world has produced no writer whose epigrams had the polish and the cutting quality-nay, the absolute matchlessness of those written by Ambrose Bierce. Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw are children compared to this giant. Theirs is a diluted spirit, his is one hundred per centum.

Now, as to his miserable end.

I am prepared at last to tell what I have hitherto deliberately withheld, or by equally deliberate misinformation have sought to conceal. Despite everything, Ambrose Bierce always was and always will be my hero, my master, and I have hated to admit that he was sordidly murdered in Mexico. But such is the case. Ambrose Bierce was shot to death by Villa soldiers a few weeks after Pancho Villa and Venustiano Carranza split. Bierce, in his old age, had embarked on the quixotic adventure of participating in a Mexican revolution. He had joined the Villa forces and was with that General at the taking of Chihuahua, in 1913. After Villa was installed in Chihuahua City, there was virtually nothing for Bierce to do and he began to drink tequila, the vilest liquor that Mexico produces. Those who drink it for any length of time literally turn blue. In his ebriose condition, he committed the folly of criticising Villa. Bierce had with him a peon who had worked a bit in Texas and understood a little English, even as Bierce understood a few phrases of Spanish. This man drank with Bierce and parroted Bierce's condemnation of Villa's methods. Becoming restless for action, Bierce suggested that they desert to the Carranza side. This was overheard and carried to Villa. The peon was forced to confess under torture, and Villa sardonically ordered him to lead the Americano out of Chihuahua City, to join Carranza. They left at night and had not gone a quarter of a mile when they were overtaken by a squad of soldiers and shot down like dogs. Their bodies were left where they lay, to be devoured by the vultures. I think that Bierce, burnt out, was bent on dying in Mexico, though doubtless he would have liked the circumstances of his exit to have been more glamorous.

Nearly ten years later, I wrote to Pancho Villa for an interview. I wanted to include him in my series, Men in Mexico.

The General very politely, if lugubriously, declined to say any thing for publication. But I would not stay refused, and went to see him. I was warmly received and told all I desired to know .

In the course of the conversation, I asked lightly if he had many American friends. The General expatiated upon the numerous trips he had made to Los Angeles with his brother Hipolito. I then asked if he recalled " Don Ambrosio, " as I had been told he called Bierce. Villa's face became dark, and he frowned formidably .

That Gringo was this and was that, said Villa. For a time, he had paid no attention to him at all and had permitted him to souse himself with tequila. It was only after the Gringo had contemplated treachery that he was driven away .

" Driven away ! " I came no closer than that to a confirmation of the murder from Villa's own lips. But I interpreted " driven away" quite differently from what we in America understand by the term . I had every reason to do so. It confirmed the evidence I had already pieced together, and which I have outlined above. \*

[ NOTE : Mr. Adolphe de Castro has recently won a law suit, which compels the publishers of a collected edition of the works of Ambrose Bierce to recognize him as the co - author of The Monk and the Hang man's Daughter . - Editor, The American Parade.]

\* Copyright by phe de Castro .

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THE NATION, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1926

PRESTO ! SAID THE MODERN CAESAR, and found himself sitting on the top of Italy's Government, with only the King for company and the voice of the Opposition no longer heard in the land. It is perhaps only natural that Signor Mussolini, having achieved this triumph with comparatively little trouble, should consider his powers above the ordinary. Accordingly, without pausing for breath , he has issued an order which will test his capacities to the utmost : in five years Rome is to be restored to its majesty under Augustus. Just like that. The Theater of Marcellus, the Capitol, the Pantheon are to be surrounded by great open squares, with broad avenues leading to them ; new schools, houses, baths, gardens, and playgrounds for good Fascists

are to be prepared ; " vast, well-ordered, powerful ... Rome must again become the wonder of the whole world . " But why stop there ? There is the Forum, thirty feet below the level of the modern city. Why not reduce Rome to its old level, restore the ancient temples, including the sublime Temple of Castor and Pollux, of whose former magnificence only three noble columns are left, banish the Christians who demolished all this grandeur, reline the endless corridors of the Palatine with marble, hang them with silk and fill them with slaves, and move in, Emperor Benito the Great, to rule fittingly over all ? While this is being done by competent artisans under the master's eye, there is another little matter that might be attended to ; one troublesome voice is still lifted in Rome, one voice that Augustus certainly would not have tolerated. From the Vatican still comes defiance of the Fascist Government; the Holy See is not yet ready to accept violence as a creed or Mussolini as a dictator. And to the firm and unequivocal stand taken by the Osservatore Romano, the official Vatican organ, the Government can only reply a little timidly that it " regrets" that such statements should be printed.

## RUSSIA'S WAR GUILT BECOMES PLAINER

JUST before Christmas Associated Press newspapers announced what was said to be the sensational disclosure of a hitherto unknown document proving that Russia was guiltless in 1914 and desirous of avoiding hostilities. The New York Times carried half a column under the headline : " Prove Russia Tried to Avert Great War . " This supposedly startling document is the minutes of the Russian Ministerial Conference of July 24, 1914, and it is published in the January issue of Current History, together with an editorial introduction by Robert C. Binkley, librarian of Stanford University. It is alleged to prove that " the original intent of the Russian Government ( perhaps, by implication, of the French Government also ) was honorable and pacific . " What are the facts in the case ? While it is, perhaps, true that this is the first time that the document has been published in full in English, its contents have been known by scholars for some time. The decisions of this conference are summarized in detail in the " Diary " of Baron M. F. Schilling, Chief of Chancellery of the Russian Foreign Office in 1914 ( English edition , pp. 30-31 ) , which was published in



German nearly two years ago and appeared in an English edition early last year. So much for the novelty of the information, though we may be grateful to Mr. Binkley for giving us the text in English in easily accessible form .

The implications of the document are even further from the assertions in the article and the Associated Press dispatch . Instead of being a proof of Russian desire for peace, it presents evidence to the contrary, demonstrating that Russia took measures for mobilization a day earlier than we hitherto had supposed. In 1920 Professor Fay could find no evidence for mobilization measures before the conference on the afternoon of the 25th . We now know that the moment Russia learned of the terms of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia , and before Serbia had an opportunity to reply , she began the preparation for those military measures which inevitably led to the European War. The ministers, with the Czar's approval, authorized the mobilization of the four great military districts of central and southern Russia, discussed in the secret Crown Council of February 8, 1914, and of the Baltic and Black Sea fleets. We know from the secret Austrian documents that Austria had planned to make the demands upon Serbia so extreme that Serbia would be unlikely to accede, with the result that Austria would intervene to punish Serbia by armed force. But the Russians did not know this at the time.

As to the alleged conciliatory plans urged upon Serbia , these were probably subterfuge. Russia did not want Serbia to declare war on Austria for several reasons. It would have put Serbia in a bad light before European opinion, which was still shocked at the assassination of the Arch duke, and would have greatly handicapped Russia in her plan of intervention in behalf of Serbia. Also it would have precipitated hostilities too soon for Russia.

This ardent desire of the French and Russians to gain time is seen in the fact that the most insistent demand of both governments, as soon as they learned the terms of the Austrian ultimatum , was that Serbia have more than forty eight hours to prepare her reply. Quite as illuminating, as bearing upon the Serbian reply, is the knowledge we now possess that it was drafted in the French Foreign Office at Paris by the deputy political director, Berthelot.

To have had Serbia make an appeal to the Great Powers would have been a gesture of real import for propaganda, similar to the appeal of Belgium which Sir Edward Grey

later wormed out of that country after an effort. Still further, we cannot be sure that the words of advice to the Serbians were not for public consumption only. At least, we know that the Serbians ordered the mobilization of their entire army three hours before they sent the messenger to Austria to deliver the answer to the ultimatum .

Finally, as even Mr. Binkley admits, the guilt of Russia is not to be established or demolished by one document. It rests upon the plans of Izvolski from 1908 to 1914 ; on the memorandum of Sazonov to the Czar on December 8, 1913, telling him that Russia must have the Straits and that they could not be secured without European complications leading to a general war ; on the minutes of the secret Crown Council of February 8 , 1914, at which the Russians decided not to strike Turkey unaided but to await the expected general European war ; upon Sazonov's decision to order Russian general mobilization on July 29, successfully executed the next day, when Germany's pressure on Austria was at its height and when there was every prospect for a pacific settlement ; upon the full admission of Dobrorolski that the Russian authorities knew that nothing on earth could stop a European war after the mobilization order was sent out on July 30 ; upon Sazonov's declaration to England and France on July 27 that he would tolerate no moderating influence upon the Russian program ; and upon Izvolski's proud boast in early August, 1914, " C'est ma guerre !" How much good faith there was in Sazonov's proposals for European conferences in 1914 is well illustrated by the fact that his most insistent plea for a conference came late on July 31, two days after he had determined upon war and twenty - four hours after he had authorized the order which meant irrevocable war . Sazonov has been afforded two opportunities recently to defend himself against the charge that he precipitated the European War through the premature and unjustifiable Russian mobilization, but even he has not cited this Ministerial Conference of the 24th as evidence in his behalf. Much more relevant and convincing is Sazonov's own statement in 1916 : Herr Bethmann - Hollweg maintains that France and Russia would never have dared to accept the challenge of Germany if they had not been sure of the support of England. But the real political situation was the following, even if the Chancellor will not admit it : in reality France and Russia, notwithstanding their profound love for peace

and their sincere efforts to avoid bloodshed , had decided to break the pride of Germany at any price and to make her stop, once for all, treading on the toes of her neighbors. But we do not have to rely upon general argument or circumstantial evidence to prove the war -like intentions of Russia and France from the 24th onward. General Dobro rolski in his authoritative memoir on the mobilization of the Russian army ( p. 21 ) tells us that from the point of view of the Russian General Staff “ war had been a cer tainty ” from the 24th “ onward.” General measures prepara tory to war were proclaimed on the 26th.

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#### THE RUSSIAN BALLETS:

It Sojourns in a Strange Land

by Charles Zwaska

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Little Review, March 1916

We were disappointed—and we had no right to be. Authorities say this organization brings the music of the nineteenth century to its logical conclusion. Logical—see? Authorities are always that. So let's be logical and philosophical and reason that what belongs to the nineteenth has no place this far into the twentieth century. Granted. “Well, then, what \_do\_ you want?” they question. I should answer \_The Faun\_ or something beyond this, finding its manner and inspiration in this form—interpretive, impressionistic, compressed, emotional. Of all the Ballets presented by Diaghileff's Ballet Russe that is, to me, the most indicative of what the future is to be, so far as ballet and ballet music is concerned. We've had Isadora Duncan, and Jacques Dalcroze has been at work. Following are some impressions.

\* \* \* \* \*

L'OISEAU DE FEU.—The setting an irritating green: scroll-work gates in the background. Mere finical, petty child's scribbling in its conventionalized balancing. The characters and their work about on the same level. Bakst costumed them, but the strength of the Hunter's garb is not carried into his action—he's a most unvirile huntsman. And the finale! a coronation: quite the proper climax for this. Rather interesting though to have curtain fall on the incoming procession. The music—Stravinsky's—fascinating.

\* \* \* \*

SCHÉHÉRAZADE.—“Barbaric” they say—yes, it’s a harem scene, you know. But broad and daring as Bakst’s color is it’s not \_very\_ far from the \_usual\_ harem scene. The lighting was not as good as it should have been. A serious offense, for the shadows interfered with the action several times; but they aided the bizarreness of the kaleidoscopic whirl at the height of the “barbarities.” This is known as “good ensemble work”—good, yes, but unusual? No longer so. They say there are no “principals” in this very modern ballet, but it seems that \_one\_ person gets the “principal parts”—I refer to Bolm. Right here I’d like to quarrel with his work—he is “principaled” too often to escape notice. His Le Negre was lithe, one necessity of the role, but it was nothing else! His supposedly ecstatic whirls would break annoyingly. A tiny dressed-up monkey. The end of his leap to Zobeide’s couch was most ungraceful, awkward. These same broken whirls, leaps, and evident stumblings—they seemed nothing else—appeared in \_Prince Igor\_. Seeing these two ballets on the same bill emphasizes this persistent failing. He, as the Desired One and the Desiring in \_Schéhérazade\_, made the infatuation rather absurd, inhuman. The Grand Eunuch, strange to say, was the human one—his wavering and final surrender of his duty to the caresses of the females! As a whole: all the passion, all the “lust,” superbly expressed human-ness—“barbaric,” perhaps, but human.

\* \* \* \*

CARNAVAL.—A deep blue background—a background that \_backs\_. Two settees, weak spots they seemed. But nevertheless, against and into this blue came Pierrot, Schumann music, and Colombine. Pierrot seemed grotesque, absurd—lovers usually do. Excellent pantomime, then other lovers come upon the scene. Pierrot steps out of the picture into the dark outer stage, his white and spots of springtime green lying in a heap in the center. The lovers maneuver. After their not vain pursuits, momentary, yet so poignant, Colombine returns to a most itching, subtle, ecstatic melody—and with her is Arlequin!! The knave! see the curve of his back and the curve of his thighs and legs! Pierrot must be in on this! and \_Carnaval\_ proceeds. Arlequin is now and then out of the picture posing on the frame, the dark fore-stage, looking on: and in such moments we have all—everything for our eyes, our ears and our hearts: color, movement, sound, in themselves emotions but also emotions of hearts that are seeking.

\* \* \* \*

LES SYLPHIDES.—Genee. In what years was she at her height? And how many generations preceded her as exponents of her particular form of the Dance? I dare say “in those days” when the “people wanted” such things they wanted them well done. “People” still want it, but evidently not done well. The background—Belasco!—well, never mind that. The \_Chopiniana\_ that Rabinoff’s Russians did had at least finesse; this one has terrible ragged edges. Even the solo works, waltzes, and prelude seemed chosen with little taste—the presenting of the thing at all was offensive taste.

\* \* \* \* \*

PRINCE IGOR.—The red of the tents not “barbaric,” the paganism of the costumes a trifle faded, and the leaps of the warriors (Bolm, the “chief warrior,” you remember) not convincing. The mob, or “ensemble,” if you must, properly wild and abandoned. The music is the kind that you beat time to with your feet, you know—primitive I think they call it. Well, the “very moderns” failed us again—do you see?

\* \* \* \* \*

L’APRÈS MIDI D’UN FAUNE.—Green. Some how I was expecting purple, the hazy opaque purple of a woodland when the sun enters it from one side; and still I think that purple would have fitted the Debussy music and the mood of the faun,—a mood, of course dependent on the music. But it was green, with rather weak spots of red. This scene framed by a Greek border of pale and dark blue and white. In front of this frame, looking into the picture at the languid, piping faun, moved nymphs. They seemed part of the border—a decoration from an urn or from the walls of some temple. The faun leaves his knoll and moves into the decorative sphere of the maidens. Beautiful movement, repressed, conventionalized. A scarf is left by one of the maidens; they have all left the faun. He has nothing but this to remember them by. Returning to his mossy rock he possesses the scarf. No lover more delicately held the body of his love or with more reverence knelt toward her. The curtain lowers here—the faun is left to dream. “Now, look here, my friends,” as \_the\_ Lecturer would say, stamping across the stage; “away with all this nonsense and hypocrisy, this clatter about ‘indecent,’ ‘revolting,’ ‘vicious,’ ‘offensive,’ ‘decadent,’ and such blabber! Admit that your life, you critics, living for art as you pretend to, is made up of just such things—in fact if you were honest you’d admit your entire life is wholly, first and last, rooted, aye, \_dwelling\_ on just this episode, and yet you cry aloud unto the heavens ‘indecent,’ ‘revolting,’ ‘offensive’ when it is beautifully simple and much more perfectly

presented before you than you'll ever experience it yourself. And as for the substitution of the scarf, well, the psychology of the incident is perfect and the whole thing is heightened by art, my friends, \_art\_—and you of course, living as you do amongst the fleshpots and the Market Place and knowing not of the Groves of Dionysius and the Temples on the hillsides at Athens—can't see it. Well. The gods have pity on you and may you be shown joy in the hereafter—God knows your chastity will keep you from it here.”

\* \* \* \* \*

LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE.—Fragmentary concession to those who “loved” \_Les Sylphides\_ and, botanically speaking, a “shoot” from that ballet and the (unpresented here) \_Papillons\_ of Schumann. Necessary, no doubt, to remind us of our ballet history and, like historical data, necessary but uninteresting. Bakst's bedroom setting \_does\_ justify the presenting of this, however.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOLEIL DE NUIT.—M. Leonide Massine—\_Youth!\_ If you were present at creation's turmoil perhaps \_les Bergers\_ would always have been delightful and \_les Paysannes\_ always happy and colorful—and, of course, we would have had many more serious and glorious Bouffons! The \_purity\_ of this ballet—color, music (Rimsky-Korsakov), dancing and pantomime—is astounding, and beautiful!

\* \* \* \* \*

CLEOPATRE.—\_I\_ have been to Egypt! All ages have known Cleopatra—her evil and magnificence; and none will forget that she had slaves. No age since hers can know of her allurements and the grandeur of her reign of the souls of two of her slaves as the Russians have shown them to ours! A temple in Egypt: of pillars once believed eternal, along the then sacred Nile. Amoun, one of her slaves, loving and loved by another, Ta-or, craves the caresses of the great Cleopatra! He succeeds: they are granted midst colorful revels, music made by Assyrians and dancing by dancers from Greece. The moment is too short ... he pays for it with his life. The revelers leave, and none in their indifference so cold as the Queen herself. In the thickness of a red evening, the hall deserted, one heart still beats. Ta-or grieves over her lost love—alone. I have been to Egypt ... learned the ways of women—and the world!

\* \* \* \* \*

PETROUCHKA.—Primary things: red, blue, yellow; love, hate, jealousy; people and artists. All told together in a ballet whose dramatic unification finds its remarkable inspiration in the music. No doubt Stravinsky's most important music for the stage. *Pétrouchka*, eternal paradox of beauty encased in ugliness. His jealousy of the Moor, who also loves the Ballerine, is the ballet, and the music. Foremost the music! *Pétrouchka*, in whirling frenzy alone with night and the stars; the Ballerine haunting him with piercing notes blown from a silver horn; his discovery of the Moor with his love; and the mannekins entering into the public square, halting the folk-music of the peasants and squires; *Pétrouchka's* death in the snow and the appearance of his spirit. All these episodes are \_music\_. Here one gets the ingenious use of an orchestra, extraordinary combinations of instruments. Carpenter attempted this, you remember, in his \_Perambulator\_. Igor Stravinsky has accomplished it. He with Leon Bakst, is the most important figure of the Russian Triumph. They worked together to achieve \_*Pétrouchka*\_.

\* \* \* \* \*

The agonizing lack of an audience excuses Diaghileff in laying aside a completely perfect matinee program in favor of one that would attract modern children with their innocent parents, but, artistically, there is no justification of this bowing to the "public" and to "morals" in the reasoning that moved them to tone down the color of the slaves in \_*Schéhérazade*\_ . The contrast was needed: black was in the color plan, especially for *Le Negre*. This makes us suspicious that the other uneven and faulty spots were caused by just such managerial schemings. Seeing some the second and third times strengthened these suspicions! The journalistically "notorious faun" on its third performance (a matinee) moved less lithely and, that there be no "effrontery of good taste," posed stupidly, stiffly, while the tense vibrating music panted for \_movement\_—for entry into life. And \_*Cleopatre*\_! Much as it was Americanized by being "less sensuous, etc.," the second performance descended to mere Grand Opera pageantry, or nearer, to a Grand Opera Gala Performance vaudeville. The actual center of interest, the Queen's couch, was draped by a still, unamorous—yet Decency and the Parents' League be praised!—unoffensive lover.

In a strange land; so strangely treated! That prophets might be understood in another land their priests distort them that barbarians may comprehend!

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Intro to 'The "Wicked and Criminal Fight" in England'  
The Nation - May 12, 1926

"That's what Ramsay MacDonald has called it, and that is what it is. More than that, it is a revolt against the old, decaying political order which once more, in the person of a good and kindly man, Premier Baldwin, has shown its utter incompetency to deal with a pressing economic issue that cannot be solved until it is solved aright. "

=====



# Impromptu.

S. Liapounow, Op. 5.

Piano. *Allegretto piacevole. ♩ = 10*

*p* *dolce*

*p*

*mf* *cresc.*

*f* *d.*

NB. L'emploi des pédales est confié  
au goût de l'exécutant.  
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This page of musical notation consists of six systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

- System 1:** Features a melody in the treble and a bass line in the bass. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present.
- System 2:** Continues the melody and bass line. A dynamic marking of *più p* (even softer) is present.
- System 3:** The melody and bass line continue. A dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) is present.
- System 4:** The melody and bass line continue. A dynamic marking of *lusingando* (luringly) is present.
- System 5:** The melody and bass line continue. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is present.
- System 6:** The melody and bass line continue. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present.



This page contains six systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The notation is written for both the right and left hands on grand staves. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:** Features a complex right-hand melody with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. A *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking is present in the right hand.
- System 2:** Continues the melodic development. A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is placed between the staves.
- System 3:** The right hand has a more active, descending melodic line. The left hand has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics *f* (forte) and *s.* (sotto) are marked.
- System 4:** The right hand features a series of chords and dyads. A *sciolto* (ad libitum) marking is present.
- System 5:** Continues the chordal texture in the right hand with a moving bass line in the left hand.
- System 6:** The final system on the page. It concludes with a *sfz mf* (sforzando mezzo-forte) marking.



Un poco meno mosso. ♩ = 88-100  
quasi improvvisato.



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THE MIDLAND  
A MAGAZINE OF THE MIDDLE WEST  
VOL. XII JUNE, 1926

FOREST DWELLER  
By EDNA BRYNER

The man paced up and down and around through the rough little hemlock house sitting cock-eyed on the edge of the road. His wife, heavy with child, moved slowly and reproachfully about at her tasks. He cast uneasy glances at her. It was hard on her. The woods were hard on women. Just now, things were in a mess with her that way and their not being able to get into the house where they were to settle down.

Everything would begin right if only the mill manager would get his family of red-haired daughters out of the big house on the other side of the spring, as he had promised. Then, in short order, they would move, tear down this shack so that no squatters could take it, and settle down in good earnest.

His six-year-old daughter, his only daughter, sat in the little red rocking-chair that he had given her three Christmases ago, watching him pace up and down, watching her mother move heavily about the house. A thoughtful little thing. She was probably thinking about school. She had just begun when they came down into the woods. She was too tiny yet to walk the long rough mile to Town. But she was quick, with a sound head on those little shoulders. She would make it up soon enough.

His slow burdened pacing filled the place, pushed the air up to the rough browned rafters, into the dusky furthest corners of the room. His well-fashioned strong body smoldered in its casing of coarse work clothes, thrusting its inactivity out from it in smoke jetties.

He had a feeling of exultation, in spite of foreboding; of guilty exultation. At last he had got back into

the forest. Why back, he did not know. Certainly he had worked at times, ever since he was a young fellow, taking out timber. It was when he was seeing about a timber job that he had met his wife, a teacher like himself. And after they had been married, he had kept on working in the forest when he wasn't teaching. But that was for short spells, summers. That was throwing a bone now and then to the hungry dog within him. Now he had a full meal. He was here in the forest for good. His family was here. His work was here.

Almost suffocating was his excitement at having somehow got back into a place where the backbone of him fitted in rightly, snugly, so that it could carry a man with ease. A tall, strong, well-rooted tree, he swayed rhythmically in the wind. What mattered that the rest of him stung with the pricks of lighter maladjustments?

The house was quiet, too quiet, ominous almost, with the child sitting so still, with his wife moving heavily quiet about her work, with the youngest child asleep in another room. He could hear the souging of the forest, a broken banner of sound, down from the tree-filled space behind the house, the passing of it over the house down to the tree-filled space back of the barn, down softer and far away to the wide creek. The house was dark, with the darkness of the overcast sky without, of his wife heavy with child within, with the darkness of his active girl sitting quiet in her worn chair.

"Papa, why can't we have any butter?"

Her clear child's voice laid him open, drew blood. He moved over to her swiftly, his brow wrinkling.

"Haven't I told you that I can't get any butter? We haven't the money. It takes money to get butter."

She started out of her chair away from him but he caught her, roughly careful, and gave her a few light spansks. He felt her stiffen against him in his arms, hold her breath, fight him off. She did not cry. He put her down.

“Now will you ask for butter again?”

“No, papa.”

She went out of the front door and sat on the door-step with the wind blowing chilly about her small sturdy form. He saw her, from where he stood, look up at the gloomy sky, turning her face up the dirt road towards Goff's Mill and down the curve of the dirt road towards Town. He went suddenly and shut the door with a loud bang.

He paced up and down in a maze of shame and terror, with his brown hard hands clenched behind him, his gaze on the splintering boards of the bare floor. He felt his wife exuding reproach from a child-filled body. He turned his mind to his work. “If only we were in the other house! I've got those two young fellows that I could keep going clear on into the winter. But they won't stay at Bowser's. They don't get enough to eat. There's not much room here. They could bunk with the boys and me upstairs, but I hate to ask her. If Henderson doesn't move out soon, they'll have to come here. I'll have to ask her to-night.”

He went out and stood on the doorstep. His little daughter looked up at him with a strange, fearsome expression. He said, “Better run in, Annie. It's cold for a little girl out here.” She got up soberly and went into the house.

He stood looking at the thick dark forest that enclosed the cleared space where the little house sat with spring and springhouse near and past them the big house with its blue front door an impudent patch against the weatherstained hemlock boards. There was a confusion of sounds from branches waving, moving back and forth incessantly. There was a sound of water, of the far off rush of the wide swift mill stream, of dozens of small streams tumbling down the sides of the hills in haste to get to the wide creek. He was wrapped in the confusion of sounds. Boundless forest stretching out on all sides for two hundred miles with only mills and



knots of houses enclosed in it! Enough work here for a man! A lifetime of work.

He went in, lost to his wife's eternal reproach, lost to the steady contemplation of his small daughter. In his strong tough-muscled body, an oak in strength, his heart burned like a coal that gave off smoke inside of him, choking him. Was his heart from his father's people, dark charcoal burners up in the Black Forest? His brown tough hands ached to shape things that could be used out of trees. Were his hands from his mother's people, blue-eyed waggoners from Saxony?

He went to the small upper right-hand drawer of the old walnut press, took out some shaped pieces of wood and began whittling at them with his pocket knife, stopping now and then to hold them this way and that, whittling and fitting them together.

He had been lost. He had been lost all his life and for some time before that. Now he had found himself. His blood carrying bits of charcoal, his hands fumbling to shape things, had brought him here into the forest. And with him his wife, three sons, and a daughter, and a fourth son. With the fourth son he had come here. As principal of the Five Points school, he could not earn enough money for a fourth son. Over that head, the money simply refused to stretch back again to the first one. And there was no more money to be had, without more education, from teaching. He knew that. Knowing, he had cast around desperately. Offer came, like a miracle, of a three years' timber job, if he would move down into the woods. He would have a roof free over his head, rich cleared soil to grow garden stuff in, woods full of game and berries, streams with fish, a good school within walking distance for his children. Could anything be better for a man in his position?

There was something exactly right about it,— that is, after things once got settled and the job shaped itself up.

He went on whittling and fitting the parts together. The three older boys came home from school, brought

in wood, fetched water from the spring. The youngest boy awoke, toddled about, playing with bits of wood, shavings, with his smirking flat rag doll. Supper was put on the table. Subdued children's voices spoke about lessons and what the teacher said. The dishes were cleared. The little ones were put to bed; the big ones studied their lessons.

"\*T think I'll go over now and see if I ean find out when Henderson's going to get his family out," he said to his wife. "I'm going to lose those two young Canucks of mine if I can't take them in. They don't get enough toeat. I told them I'd take them in here if things weren't just the way they are, with you feeling bad and such a little place."

He was like a child in trouble, trying unsuccessfully to keep it to himself, not bother anyone with it. He raised his eyes guiltily to hers that looked sadly upon him out from her own trouble.

"Tf they'd be willing to put up with things as they are . . . I could cook for them a little while."

The mask of reproach, badly made, broke all over her face. Through the innumerable breaks welled out something that poured over him like healing balm. In the night the storm broke. The lightning zigzagged across the sky, breaking the little house again and again into fragments with its terrifying forks of light. The thunder rolled incessantly to the furthest imaginable reaches of the world. The trees crashed, groaned, sighed eternally.

He heard the sharp frightened voice of his small daughter breaking a moment of calm. "No, mama, I want to go to papa. Please, please, mama, let me go to papa's bed."

He sat up, receiving her trembling little body in its thick flannelette nightgown. "Are you afraid of the thunder? Never mind. It won't hurt you. It's just a bad noise." He helped her into bed, tucked the covers carefully around her. "Papa'll take care of you."

He lay back, with his heart that had burned so long like a coal consuming him turned into jelly. A great peace enveloped him while the heavens crashed about the house, torrents of rain fell smiting the roof, and the forest moaned, distorting its limbs in anguish.

2

They were in the big house, where there was a living room, kitchen, storeroom, and a warm bedroom for the women and little folk downstairs; and a great attic upstairs, big enough for a score of men folk. The baby had come, another boy, lusty and vociferous. Tardily on his heels came the spring, with sunshine, blue sky, new green leaves, birds, delicate flowers, faster rushing waters. His wife was quite recovered. Lightened of her burden, she moved swiftly about the house from early morning until late at night, cooking, cleaning, washing, keeping house and children shining.

The men said they had never been so well taken care of. They were a good gang he had gathered together, strong, well-set-up men, clean and decent about the house and with the children. They consumed prodigious quantities of food; and they turned out unexampled amounts of work. They made a name for themselves for food and work.

He could hardly wait for morning to come; he was miserably uneasy until he got out into the forest. There he became sure of himself, of everything, directing his men, working along with them, making the forest hum with the activity of felling trees, trimming them up, peeling off the juicy bark, piling it in neat stacks, severing the naked trunks with the well-filed crosscut saw into exactly the right length of logs. He knew how to prevent waste, to take out a tree without spoiling any of the young ones around it, to mark the bark in correct lengths, ease it off without smashing it.

After the spring term of school was over, the boys brought the dinner and helped a bit, learning the ways of things in the woods. A year more and they would be

a great help; a year or two later, a gang themselves. It was like a picnic sitting there in the thick woods with his men, eating the wholesome food his wife had prepared, taking long draughts of water from a clear spring in the shadow of a gray rock.

Sometimes he wandered off by himself, and stood and looked at the great walls of rhododendron massed along the swift creek. His heart lifted up towards the Creator of all this. He thought of his youthful ideals, of his struggles for his family that seemed now in the full flower of yielding return. With the forest swaying about him, clean and fresh, he felt quite drunk. He went back to his men and worked furiously with them the rest of the day.

He came home at dusk, often long after the rest, sweat-stained and weary, with his blood like slow thick wine in his veins.

In the fall the men went away, reluctantly, to get winter's work, promising to return in the spring with the sap. The children were in school. With the two gray mules he took out timber that he had cut, bringing it down over corduroy roads to the mill.

He planned while he worked alone in the woods. The boys would keep on going to school winters and help in the woods summers. His children would get a better education than he had. With an education they could do well for themselves. There was a great deal to be got from books, about the sources of things, for example. To go back and find out causes, clear back to the beginning, that exercised a man's mind, made it work better on everything.

At night when the wind moaned about the house, while the children did their lessons or played jackstraws and ate apples, while his wife mended stockings and trousers or taught the children part songs, he figured. He covered sheet after sheet of paper with figures and became light-hearted and gay about what he could do. After the children were in bed, he told his wife just how blooming his prospects were.

In the daytime, he had a sense of fear that what had looked so fair and clear on paper was coming out differently in terms of food and clothing. He was not coming out with anything beside his bare living, for all his phenomenal work, his good gang of men. The woods that had seemed so boundless, that were boundless, were shrinking for him. His job was going to be through on better than schedule time. He was not getting enough for his work. The Company had him. Another summer like the last and he would be finished with the job. There was no chance for a better job here where he had settled down so comfortably. He would have to look other ways. He tried to think what those other ways might be.

He wrote finally to his brother, well-to-do, a timber and oil man, without children. The brother answered at once, contrasting jocularly his own childless state with the child-burdened lot of the other and suggesting that one of the sons be sent along to him to be brought up and made heir to whatever he had.

That was an answer he had never thought of, that wasn't to be thought of, unless the boy himself P Yes, if he could better the lot of one of his children, then he must. It would certainly be Gerald, the second one. He had a bookkeeping head, would fit in best with his uncle's ways. He would tell the boy and let him decide for himself.

He was relieved of a load of bad feeling when Gerald pooh-poohed the offer. Why should he leave home to go and live with a strange uncle?

The summer passed quickly, with a new gang, not quite so good as the first. The work went well, at that, so well that it was plain the job would be over before the summer itself. He did not want to work any longer with the Company, if he could help it. There was too little left after the bills at their store were reckoned up against his work. He could never get any cash from them.

Both of the older boys, big and strong, were giving

him trouble. They hated working in the woods in summer, acted as though they were imposed upon, wanted to fool with their own traps. They did not seem to care for an education; they had spoken of stopping school. He was afraid they were getting in with the wrong kind of boys.

He wrote to his brother, asking him for his old violin, for Richard. That would help steady the boy. He had a decided bent for music. He could tune up a violin without anyone's showing him how. Old Flint had offered to give him lessons when he had a decent instrument to play on. Why did the boys hate the woods so? Just as he had hated his father's farm when he was a boy.

In the autumn, his wife talked seriously with him. Couldn't he see that it was impossible for her to keep on like that, having men live at the house, waiting on them and cooking for them?

Yes, he could see that it was hard on her. But it was impossible for him to get good men unless they had a good place to stay and good food to eat.

Couldn't he see that he was coming out in the hole, feeding his men up like that, spending all the money he made on keeping them?

"But we're kept, too. We've our house and food and clothes."

"What else have we?" Her bitterness bewildered him.

"What else?" He was puzzled, angry. Of course, she had always wanted a piano to keep on with her music. "I'd like to give you many things, but I'm a poor man. A man has to keep his family. I couldn't make enough at teaching and so I took this work that I knew how to do. I'm doing the best I can."

He thought with jealousy, with anger at himself, of her people, her father, a village man, retired farmer,

with properties, living on rents, deacon in the church, hail-fellow with everyone. He knew that she was comparing him with her father.

“T’m sorry, El. I guess I give you a pretty hard life.”

“\*Well, we’ll do the best we can. Couldn’t you get the people round about us to work for you, the Rannies, the Bowsers?”

He thought of the shiftless Rannies with their clumsy hands. “They would smash more timber than they took out.’

“\*Dave, don’t you think maybe you’re too careful with the timber?”

““Too careful!”? He looked at her amazedly.

“\*No one else is so careful about saving young timber. You waste a lot of time that way. What do those men care whether you smash a few young trees now and then ?”

“There’s no good comes of spoiling young timber. I wouldn’t let any be spoiled if they were mine and I won’t no matter whose they are. A tree .. .” He became silent, filled suddenly with cold, unexplainable fury. His hurting eyes saw only trees, trunks of young trees, innumerable, lifting up in unbroken dignity.

““You could try the Rannies, anyway. Whatever you got out of them would be clear gain. We wouldn’t be feeding them.”

Maybe if he stood over them all the time, threatened them the way he did about keeping the springs clean.

. “T’ll try them, but I’m afraid they’re not much good. I thought the boys would help me out, but they seem to hate woods.”

“They’re only young boys, Dave.””

“\*Yes, you always take their part. They’re boys, but I’m trying to make men out of them, educate them, teach them to work.”

Now his wife was silent. He grew bitter. Poison boiled up in him, spread its fumes all through him.

“\*She sets them against me,” he thought. He was in a gloomy swamp; the ground gave under him, and he had to go on.

He made a new contract with the Company to take out timber, working as best he could, with or without helpers.

The winter came and passed. He worked alone with the two gray mules, pulling logs out over the snow-packed roads, working betimes in the mill. His wife wrote long letters home and received long letters written in purple ink from her father and mother. They sent an enormous box full of all sorts of things for the house, material for clothing for the children, toys. He resented it.

The children were always needing clothes, especially shoes. His wife waited until they were all in bed to ask him to get the things they needed the next time he went to town. He dreaded for evening to come, and went to bed before the children to escape being asked for something for them. His family was an enormous egg-sac attached to his back. He carried the awkward, heavy thing around with him wherever he went. Only when he was working with all of his strength, alone in the woods, could he get rid of his burden — or sometimes on Sunday in church.

Suddenly Richard stopped school and went to work with his father. He was tired of being beholden for a living. He went to work stubbornly, without spirit, kept himself aloof from his father, not speaking unless he was spoken to, then quarreling, and being reprov'd, glowering and muttering. Not to be outdone, Gerald stopped school and went to work in the woods, too.

There was no peace now for him at all. His boys took from him the peace that he had in his work. Richard



continually accused him of favoring Gerald. The two had pitched battles and he punished both of them.

The summer came. He tried to press the Rannies into the work, but one by one he gave them up. Both Richard and Gerald helped him, then, with some show of good will. The third boy, Oliver, greased the slide for the logs to slip down and packed shingles in the mill when they were short a man, earning his clothes.

There was to be another baby. His wife went home in September to see her family and returned with everything she needed for the time when it came. He tried to be glad that she had her father and mother to go to. He would show her that he could do his part. He tramped for miles looking for a hired girl. He and Richard, in armed truce, built a new room on the house for her and lined it with apple-blossom covered paper.

The boy made him fairly beside himself, strutting around as though he were the man of the house for his mother. She had done that, of course, always taking his part. Anyway, the boy was getting on in his music, spent his evenings alone in his mother's bedroom with the night light burning, wailing away on his violin at the exercises old Flint set him.

The baby came, a girl. Things settled down into an accepted routine. The boys behaved better all around. He heard that a first rate violin teacher lived in a village forty miles away, and went 'round to the families in town who were interested in music to get together their boys in a class to share the expense so that Richard would have a real chance at music, and tramped the forty miles to make arrangements.

The very day after he came back, Richard stood him out in sauciness and he had to whip the boy, big as he was. Richard said, "You'll never whip me again. I'm going to leave this house tomorrow."

If the boy went, he'd have to let him. He would never keep him against his will. With a grim laugh he said, "All right, you can go. But you'll be glad to come

back.”

Richard came back but it was only to bring papers to be signed for his going to sea. His father signed with a hand that trembled for what it set its seal to. “ Just as I had got such a good violin teacher for him!” his sore heart mourned.

That summer Gerald went to his uncle to see whether or not he wanted to be adopted.

Well, here he was in the forest. He had his wife and children still, an older son who wasn’t strong but obedient and willing, two little boys and two little girls. He had a gray mule to help him. The boys had let one of those good helpers hurt himself so that it had to be killed.

He worked alone in the forest. At times he had a high peace. He thought of God and his ways, of how things were created. He thought that perhaps sometimes people would not need to eat food but could live just by absorbing through their skins what was round about them, the soft air of the forest, emanations from the branches of trees, the essence of the song bird. All things were possible with God.

He went to church on Sundays in his shabby best black suit. He felt sorry that his wife would never go with him. He would have liked her walking by his side up through the forest, sitting beside him in the high shining pew. He would have liked her to hear what the minister said and talk about it with him on the way home. But she said, “Who would get the dinner, if I went to church?”

He whittled away on his patent. He called it that now. It was most ingenious. Some day when he could get the money together, he was going to have it patented. He showed it to two or three men who ought to know about such things. They said he should make a lot of money out of it,— only he must make sure that nothing like it had been patented before. He found out later, when he had the thing quite in shape that it had already

been patented. But he couldn't let it alone. He kept on whittling away. Maybe he'd get something different out of it, better.

He thought of his boys. "If only both of them had stayed on with me here, we might have made something good out of it," he often said to himself while he worked alone in the woods, winter and summer and winter again.

He was doing the best he could. He fed his family and clothed them. His children were in school. Annie was the best of them all. She would go a long way in education.

### 3

Early in the spring his wife had a letter from her people calling her home. Her father was very sick. He asked for her, night and day. Hurriedly she packed a few things together and started off, taking with her the toddling little girl. Ann and Oliver must stay in school and take good care of the house and the two small boys.

Her father had always been good to her. It was right for her to go and she must stay as long as it was necessary. But it was hard on a man, very hard. Soberly and patiently he went every day to the woods, taking the smallest boy with him, clumsily fixing the noonday lunch. Often he stopped working, without knowing it, and stood leaning on his ax with his eyes fixed on the mossy surface of some long fallen log or searching the sky with its high sailing clouds. Then his small son pulled at him, he saw where he was, and started working again.

The two little boys had whooping cough and measles. He stayed at home and took care of them, awkwardly, patiently. He wrote to his wife, "The doctor says they aren't very sick. I think I can take care of them all right." He did not reprove Ann and Oliver when they burned the food. He felt listless, did not enjoy his meals. He thought, "Maybe I am going to have

measles.”

At the end of ten weeks, when school was quite over, his wife was back with new clothes for the children all around, and a fine lace-trimmed nightgown for the young daughter. There was no telling how long her father would lie in bed. He would never get up again, that was certain. He wanted her near him. She felt it was her duty. He had deeded her the big roomy house just across from his own place so that they would have a roof free over their heads, just as they had here in the woods.

She set about packing. He watched her, unwilling to comprehend.

“We’ll be much better off; living there in town we can be like other people,” she said.

“You don’t mean, El, that you’re going there to live?”

‘What else? What’s the house for if not to live in? What good is it to us to stay here?’

“But my work’s here. As long as I want it. I’m just beginning to see the light now on this job. We’ll come out this year with something to the good.”

“We’ll never come out to the good here. You can get something to do there. You have a good head for mathematics. You can get a first rate position as a book-keeper. I know people who will recommend you, if I ask them to. We’ll be somebody, not nothing as we are here. Can’t you see that we can’t live like this any longer?”

“\*A bookkeeper!” Sitting at a desk inside all day long. The words slipped out of her mouth easily, a long glittering chain that fastened him to a post. Teaching, — that had been something. At least you were your own master. But a bookkeeper!

He sat down in a chair and leaned heavily on his elbow on the round table at which the children sat to get their lessons. He saw the worn oak surface, the

grain of the hard wood. He knew that she was going, that they were going. He said to her ineffectually, “\*You’re crippling me. You’re taking my work away from me.”

She stood looking down at him in dismay, folding and unfolding some garment in her hands.

His head whirled. There were branches crashing against each other as though there were a great storm in the forest. Away from the forest! To a village! Her village. There were factories in the city nearby. Perhaps he would have to work in a factory. She had had a house given her, her house, not a rough dwelling like this, but a plastered house, painted, with neat fruit trees in the garden. Money, her father probably would give her, too. She had taken herself away — puff — just like that, to be with her father. Why shouldn’t he give her money? He had it to give.

She was going where she wanted to go, where she belonged, to her own village. He knew it. There was a way for her there now. But her way was not his way. He knew that, too, in spite of his confusion, his bewilderment, the torture of his wrenching.

She moved away from him, beginning swiftly to get things together.

He heard light, quick, gay footsteps, a high, clear, singing voice. “I’m going to high school in the city.” His daughter, well on to thirteen now, came skipping in. ““T’m going to high . . .” She saw her father, stopped short. He felt her eyes upon him with the curious searching expression that he had known a thousand times from her since she was a tiny child sitting in a red rocking chair. He was dumb, could not stir. She tiptoed past him on into the bedroom where her mother was.

As she passed, his heart felt lighter. Yes, she would go to school in the city. His mind clutched that. True, she could have stayed here two years more, but it was better to get started right in a real city school. His daughter in school. His wife to her father, to her vil-

lage, where she would be happy. And he?

He tried to plan, casting his shaken mind in a desperate gesture far out over the world. People did all sorts of things. He had heard the other day about a man who had picked up and gone to Alaska. Perhaps he could do that, just pick up and go somewhere where there was a chance of doing a big thing, something all at once, which would produce a large sum of money, as in mining. He'd see how things shaped up when he got to her village. If she was taken care of, there was no telling what he could do. In Alaska there were forests, boundless forests. Maybe he'd stake a claim there, have his own forest, say his say about his own trees, how they were to be cut, what they were to be used for. The trees would be larger there, virgin timber, some of them immense!

His wife appeared in the doorway. "We haven't much time, Dave. I think we ought to have a couple of big packing boxes."

He got up heavily. "I'll see if one of the teams will bring them down from town to-night. I'll have to go up there anyway and close things up."

He put on his hat and coat, went to the walnut press and took out some papers from the upper right hand drawer. Then he went out of the door and down the plank walk to the road. He walked slowly down the curve around the shaggy foothill to the creek where the mill sat, silent now, looking at the forest that he knew as he knew nothing else. "There I took out the best that ever was taken out," he thought. "Up there in five years there will be a nice bit. If all this weren't touched for twenty years and I could see it then!"

On the bridge he paused and gazed long at the uselessly rushing water.

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RED GERANIUM  
By Ruth Lechlitrner

My neighbor lives in this gray house of stone,  
Round which the wind, with sharp, unmellowed moan  
Rasps raw and withered. . . . See, she hurries by,  
Gaunt form erect, eyes, bitter, cold, and dry.

Her wiry skirt scrapes stiffly on the ground;  
The dead grass bristles palely up around.

Perhaps her face and life I would forget;

I do not like her chill, drab house; and yet —  
She has a little window by the stair,  
And keeps a red geranium blooming there.

TWO PORTRAITS  
By Jay G. Sigmund

SEXTON

Today he dare not let his eyes  
Drift to the river's pebbled bar;  
His rod and lures must be put aside  
And the belfry pigeons wander far.

Sundays must see his battered form  
Go down the path which leads away  
From that whittled bench where kindred souls  
Have met to spend their clockless day.

Down past the hillside where his dead,  
With neighbor dead, mould side by side  
He limps his heavy-booted way  
To summon all the countryside.

How many times across this sill  
He has watched the same ones come to pray,

Wondering in his year-logged brain  
Why men were silent on this day.

How often he has curved his palms  
Around the rope to sound his bell,  
Dreaming of silent sunfish pools  
While others cringed at talk of hell!

## SCOURGE

He has built a pyre on his feed-lot hill —  
Its rancid smoke sends ribbons to the sky;  
What solace can be offered now to him  
Who finds his dreams all shattered by a scourge  
Which flung its curse upon his barn and sty?

Were this the year's first plague he might be brought  
To see that sun above his wind-break's crest,  
But since the drifts turned mist in early spring  
It seems some evil charm of death has worked  
Until it choked the hope within his breast.

One needs abundant faith to tide him through  
The span of snow-days when the fields are wrapped,  
But if his herds are thinned when seed-time comes  
And he must spade deep graves at foaling time,  
His heart is sickened and his soul is sapped.

Now after toiling down the parching rows  
All summer through with furrow-weary tread,  
He hears in answer to his whispered prayers  
No sound of clicking hoofs about his pens,  
And he is wordless like his creature dead.

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## BRIEF REVIEWS



The Dark Tower, by Francis Brett Young. (Knopf, \$2.50.)

This novel is a rare treat for the reader who is as fond of place description as I am. The region which affords the background of the action is that of the Welsh border, and it is presented at different seasons, under varying conditions, with extraordinary vividness and with very genuine emotional contribution to the story. Indeed this novel is to some extent, like *The Return of the Native*, one in which nature is recognized as a character, and not a minor one. In this, I own my great pleasure.

The people of Mr. Young's book are vivid and emotionally potent, too. They live in memory: Judith, and the Merediths, and most of all the strangely different brothers Grosmont, the survivors of a family which has no longer its proper work to do in the world.

The structure of *The Dark Tower* is very interesting. The story is pieced together from several angles in a fashion which is very ingenious — perhaps too much so for the best effect of the novel as a whole, since the structure attracts attention to itself. On the whole, however, this is a sound and worthy piece of work.

*Royal Highness*, by THomas Mann. (Knopf \$2.50). *Royal Highness* is a valuable addition to the canon of books by Thomas Mann now available in English. Possessing neither the poignancy of *Death in Venice* nor the majestic sweep and power of *Buddenbrooks*, this novel is nevertheless possessed of a very definite merit. This lies in the fact that it makes marvellously real and understandable the whole attitude and emotional outlook of royalty. Such people as the members of the Grand Ducal family which appear in its pages are to the average American reader as remote from experience as Cerberus or the pterodactyl. These half legendary, half historical monsters the genius of Thomas Mann brings into the light of ordinary human nature shaped by extraordinary experience. And this may well be noted: the process is not one of reduction; it is merely one of humanizing explanation. The Grand Ducal personages, fabulous no longer but concrete and comprehended, become men and women of profound dramatic significance. The result is an absorbing and powerful novel which has a peculiar historical significance. J.T. F.

Collected Poems of H. D. (Boni and Liveright, \$2.50.) This is a collection in one charming volume of Mrs. Aldington's Sea Garden, Hymen, and Heliodora. It is scarcely necessary to say at this date that H. D. succeeds almost miraculously in achieving poignance for her lines through methods chiefly imagistic. I prefer, however, to forget the shibboleths of the contemporary criticism of poetry, and to rejoice in the extraordinarily delicate, clean, sharp effectiveness of the verses of this crystal-clear Sappho of our twentieth century. . . . This book is pure Greek, and a very striking product in modern poetry movements. , I enjoy the masque of "Hymen" as much as anything in it. F. L. M.

Washington Irving, Esquire, Ambassador at Large from the New World to the Old. By Gorce S. Hetuman. (Knopf, \$4.) Here is a lovely piece of work. To begin with, the book is beautifully made, so that one begins to like it before one reads a line. Leigh Hunt relates an extreme instance when he tells of seeing Lamb "give a kiss to an old folio," but why not? Beautiful books inspire lasting affection.

But the biography is itself a good one. Mr. Hellman has turned up no little new material, and he reconstructs a Washington Irving that is more human and on the whole more important than Pierre Irving's figure of legend. He shows us plainly enough what most people have long suspected — that so gallant and sentimental a gentleman as Irving had more than one woman in his life after the pathetic death of his betrothed. And Mr. Hellman does this without really proving that Irving proposed marriage to any but Matilda Hoffman herself and to Emily Foster,— episodes already set forth by other writers. Mr. Hellman's success is a matter of emphasis and perspective. I am grateful to him, moreover, for being plain about Irving's religious reactions: certainly the effort of the Sleepy Hollow church to make the author of "Rip" a kind of church-saint is an odd bit of irony that would have tickled the good Irving to many quiet chuckles.

Of course, Mr. Hellman cannot write as well as Charles Dudley Warner, whose Irving is one of the ornaments of the American Men of Letter series, nor does he give much attention to literary criticism, as Warner, or document voluminously, as Pierre Irving; but he gives us a more adequate portrait than either of these

biographers, and a readable book withal. F. L. M.

If Today Have No Tomorrow, by OLIVE GILBREATH. (Dutton, \$2.00). This book is interesting for at least two things: its emphasis on the fascination of Russia for the Anglo-Saxon, and its impressive pictures of Russia during the revolution. Miss Gilbreath owns a “lifetime love” for Russia, and the richness of detail in the book reveals her intimate knowledge of the country both before and during war times. The hero of the story is Michael Acar, a young man of English birth and education, who has inherited a number of factories and estates in and about Moscow. When war breaks out, the War Office in London asks him to stay in Moscow to represent English interests there instead of enlisting, as he prefers to do. Here with a few Russian friends and the English, French and Scotch military men that get into the city he passes the winter of the revolution — the days of rioting in the streets, and of the Bolsheviki mob-law when a general massacre seems imminent. The story of his perplexities and alternate hope and despair form the heart of the novel. His Anglo-Saxon code adjusts itself less easily to the topsy-turvy state of affairs than does the Russian creed of “seizing the moment.”

Bits of pleasant description reveal the charm of the country —the summer days at Lovely Meadows, “the faint hill of the Urals shadowing the snow with a deep violet.” The style is attractive, and the book is interesting and impressive throughout.

V8 ms

The Grace of Lambs, by Manuet Komrorr. (Boni & Liverlight, \$2.00). Manuel Komroff is for me one of the chief discoveries of the past year. He is both thinker and artist, and his stories, shaped as they are almost inevitably by their content, strike each a true and fine note. There is variety in this first collection : the title story deals with a Chinese philosophical concept as ancient as profound; “The Beating of the Reed” is filled with grotesque humor; “How It Feels to Be Free” is simple and powerful and sombre.

Mr. Komroff is American-born, of Russian extraction; he edited an English paper in Russia during the revolution; he

is now employed in a New York publishing office. I have great interest and no little confidence in his future achievement.

F. L. M.

The Silver Stallion, by James Brancu CaBett. (McBride, \$2.50). And thus the Biography grows! The new volume fits snugly into its place, following Figures of Earth, and Cabell enthusiasts are granted a few more hours of delight. I wonder how many of them will open the book, as I did, with secret fear that the deft hand may have faltered; most of them will close it agreeing with me that the magician is yet master of his enchantments. To be sure, this book is less potent than Jurgen or Figures of Earth. But that is largely because no single robustious personality disports himself throughout its pages. It is inevitable that in reporting the disasters which overtake Dom Manuel's nine survivors of the fellowship of the Silver Stallion there should be some slight inequalities of interest and enthusiasm. But the book contains as much of comedy as its predecessors; it is indeed more Rabelaisian in details, though not in spirit. And there are the same heart-stopping moments of sheer beauty; the same devastating and ironic cosmology is expressed in vivid parables that are strange and diverting. In short, Horvendile is himself. May he devise all that he has intended, with such embroideries, such scholia and literary afterthoughts, as may seem good to him, before he follows the nine heroes and their master! Such is the hearty wish of one who yet begs to remain (most of the time) a humble realist.

é. FF.

## BIOGRAPHICAL

Edna C. Bryner was born in the lumbering region of central western Pennsylvania, and spent her childhood there. She is a graduate of Vassar. She has taught in various schools (including a reform school for girls) and has done research in eugenics, education, housing, etc., in connection with the Sage Foundation and other institutions. In 1920 she turned definitely to writing, and has published stories in The Dial, Century, Bookman, and Holland's.

The name of Miss Ruth Lechlitrer is familiar to readers of The Midland. Her home is in Lansing, Michigan.

Jay G. Sigmund's work is also familiar to our readers. Mr. Sigmund is vice-president of the Cedar Rapids Life Insurance Company.

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What happened to these writers; research from 2/19/22:

<https://prabook.com/web/jay.sigmund/3778875>

Jay G. Sigmund was born on December 11, 1885, to farmers Herman R. and Sarah Jane (Bruce) Sigmund on a farm about one mile south of Waubeek, Iowa, northeast of Cedar Rapids, on the Wapsipinicon River.

Jay G. Sigmund was an American businessman, writer, poet, amateur archeologist, and an encourager of the arts.

Sigmund took up writing and his work was published in various newspapers such as the Cedar Rapids Republican, Dubuque Telegraph Herald, Waukon Republican and Standard, and the Witness. His first book of poetry was published in 1922. His short stories appeared in such magazines as the Tanager, Overland Monthly, Hinterland, the Gammadion, the Frontier, and The Hub. He often published in the Midland, a literary journal.

By the time of his death, Jay Sigmund had published over 1,200 poems, 125 short stories, and 25 one-act plays, all written during his spare time from his insurance work.

The Linn County Conservation Commission dedicated a seven-acre park on the Wapsipinicon River near Waubeek in honor of Jay Sigmund.

#### Works

Jay G. Sigmund: Selected Poetry and Prose Jay G. Sigmund: Selected Poetry and Prose  
1939

#### Died

October 19, 1937 (aged 51)  
Waubeek, Iowa, United States

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Ruth Lechlitrer (1901-1989)

<https://digital.sonomalibrary.org> › Documents › Detail

Feb 14, 2012 — Ruth Lechlitrer has been writing poetry for more than half a century. Her collections span the period from 1937 to 1973. Born in Elkhart, Indiana (near South Bend), to Jessie Wier James and Martin Lechlitrer, Ruth Naomi Lechlitrer received a B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1923 and an M.A. from the University of Iowa in 1926. She married Paul F. Corey and lived in Cold-Spring-on-Hudson, New York, in the 1930s before settling in Sonoma, California, in the late 1940s. Although she has also written radio verse plays, prose word-portraits of literary figures such as children's author and illustrator Marguerite de Angeli, book reviews, and thoughtful appraisals of poets such as W.H. Auden and William Carlos Williams, her chief work has been poetry.

<https://digital.sonomalibrary.org/Documents/Detail/ruth-lechlitrer-1901-1989/91442>

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Edna Bryner was born in Tylersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1866 and graduated from Vassar in 1907. After college she worked at a number of jobs, including serving on the staff of the Russell Sage Foundation for five years. During that period she conducted a study of the garment trades in Cleveland and directed a housing survey of New York City. After 1918 she devoted herself to writing short stories and novels. A critic wrote of her first novel Andy Brandt's Ark that "from it one learns a great deal about how a fairly typical young woman of the newest vintage thinks and feels." Bryner married Arthur Schwab in 1916 but continued to use her maiden name. In 1939 her interest in Asian religions led her to seek instruction from professor Bernhard Geiger, a philologist at Columbia. She became an expert on Tibetan Buddhist literature and was asked by the City Art Museum of St. Louis to make a study of a series of Tibetan temple paintings it had purchased. Her Thirteen Tibetan Tankas is an important contribution to the study of the rebirth doctrine in Buddhism.

Bryner died 28 January 1967.

[https://www.vassar.edu/specialcollections/collections/manuscripts/findingaids/bryner\\_edna.html](https://www.vassar.edu/specialcollections/collections/manuscripts/findingaids/bryner_edna.html)

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## ON THE TREATMENT OF VEGETABLES

With a Few Illustrative Recipes

The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Handbook of Cookery for a Small House, by Jessie [Mrs. Joseph] Conrad

Great care should be taken in the use of an onion. One often finds that if by accident a knife used for cutting an onion has been overlooked and it comes in contact with any article of food the flavour of the onion will spoil everything. It is also a fact that if an onion is cut before it is put into soup or sauce, the soup at once becomes cloudy, while on the other hand if it is merely peeled and put in whole, soup or sauce will remain perfectly clear. Then again for onion sauce or soup which would be made with milk, you must never put in any salt or any other ingredient till after the milk has boiled. If the onion is added before, the milk will curdle and be spoilt.

If you want to fry onions for steak, etc., have some good beef dripping already melted in a baking tin and when it is boiling put in the quantity of onions you may wish to cook cut in thin slices (cut always round the onion) then add salt and pepper to taste and bake in a steady oven, turning them once or twice with the blade of a knife.

For stuffing for either meat or poultry never put the onions in water. Cut thin as above directed (never chop) and boil in a deep frying pan in butter. By boiling I mean using a larger quantity of fat and not allowing the onions to be browned: one-fourth lb. will be quite sufficient for stuffing intended for a goose. Have ready on the board the crumb of a stale white loaf rubbed through a cheese-grater, and from four to five large sage leaves chopped fine. Mix the two together with pepper and salt to taste, turn the whole contents of the pan into the crumbs and chop finely all together. In this way the stuffing will be found moist and will not repeat after eating.

In cooking green vegetables use common soda not bi-carbonate. They should be always put into boiling water.

Fresh peas should never be shelled over night and should be kept in a covered dish after shelling till it is time for them to be cooked. Peas will become quite tough if exposed to the air for any length of time. Always put into boiling water, never add salt or soda till the peas are boiling. Scarlet runner beans should only be cut in strips in time for boiling as the edges become hard and dry if left for more than an hour. These are best kept in cold water. Dwarf beans should be treated in the same manner, but can be served with only the ends and edges removed.

All salads should be put into a bowl of cold water with a good piece of salt for not more than ten minutes before needed. A wire basket swung round vigorously will be found the best mode of drying all salads before dressing.

If lettuce is to be cooked, cos-lettuce will be found better than the cabbage variety. It will become greatly reduced in the cooking and is much improved by being lightly sauté in a frying pan in which a finely shredded spring onion has been lightly fried in a little butter. Form into small mounds with a tablespoon, and serve very hot.

Cabbage and cauliflower should be put for awhile before cooking into a bowl of cold water with a good piece of salt, head down and the stump cut four times across.

Spinach requires washing in several waters with a liberal quantity of salt. But the last water without salt. Have ready a large saucepan at least half full of boiling water. If, as some people direct, you put spinach into a nearly dry saucepan on the assumption that it has absorbed enough water to be cooked in, there will be an unpleasant smell. Add salt and a piece of ordinary soda about as big as a large pea. Boil with the lid off till quite tender. The spinach should then be a beautiful shade of green. Treat sorrel the same way; only it will be noticed that it will change colour directly it is put into the boiling water, becoming a greeny yellow, and is slightly acid in taste. It is usually eaten with veal, with poached eggs served on it, or as a dish by itself served with fried bread round the edge.

Tomatoes are always very useful and can be accommodated in many different ways. For a breakfast dish—take, for two persons, four nice sound tomatoes. Place in a large basin and scald with boiling water over them. The skin will then peel off quite easily leaving the tomatoes perfectly whole. Cut into slices and put into a cold pan with a piece of butter about the size of a tablespoon and a pinch of salt and pepper. Place on the fire and break the tomatoes in the butter as they cook. Let them fry frequently and serve under poached eggs. Another way: Take four or more tomatoes, remove the stalk but not the skin. Cut the top off, scoop the fruit out leaving a wall, have ready some chopped lean ham, chicken or other meat, add a little onion to the inside which has been taken out of the tomatoes, pepper and salt. Put into a small frying pan, and fry lightly, put the mixture into the tomato, have a little dripping melted in a baking tin, place the tomatoes into it, when hot put the top on the tomato to form a lid and bake from 15 to 20 minutes.

In preparing mushrooms, peel carefully the skin, gently pull the stalk out and lay them dark side down in a little cold water with a good knob of cooking salt, this will remove any grit or insects. Have ready a flat frying pan large enough to take the mushrooms lying flat; lay each one dark side down and boil in butter gently for about seven minutes, turn them over with the blade of a knife and let them continue cooking for another ten minutes to a quarter of an hour; pepper and salt to taste. Or in another way, take a large flat frying pan; put into it about an ounce of butter, two tablespoonfuls of best malt vinegar, place over a quick fire and let it burn slightly. That is to say it is ready when it smokes. Lay the mushrooms as before directed, proceed in the same way, adding only a little finely chopped onion in the centre of each mushroom, place dark side up either on toast buttered or on a flat dish, pour over the butter from the pan and serve very hot. Sprinkle thinly with chopped onion after the mushrooms are in the dish.

Mushroom rissoles make an excellent breakfast dish and may be served in little stone marmites instead of pastry. Carefully wash mushrooms as directed above. Take a little strong beef gravy (not bovril or other meat essence) cut the mushrooms into lengths, each one into four or five, put them into [Pg 13] a small saucepan with pepper and salt and enough gravy to cover, stew for an hour. Thicken with a little flour mixed smoothly with water. This can be kept over night and warmed in the morning.

Turnips make a very good dish with roast pork, treated as follows: Carefully peel ten or twelve nice firm turnips, reject the woolly as they are not worth cooking (except for flavouring); cut into slices, then into lengths, then into small squares (the appearance of a dish is as important as the taste); boil gently for about half an hour or until tender, strain and serve very hot with a little melted butter poured over them, pepper and salt to taste.

Carrots, if very young, must on no account be peeled, but only lightly scraped and then cooked in a covered saucepan till tender. Serve very hot with a little melted butter and a little finely chopped parsley sprinkled over them. Care should be taken not to boil too long as these tender young vegetables are apt to become soft and tasteless. When the carrots are older and bigger they should be carefully peeled and cut in rings about one-eighth of an inch thick. There is also



this pretty and appetising way to serve carrots. Cook them as above directed and have ready the following in a lined saucepan (double saucepan): a half pint of boiling milk with salt to taste, one and a half level tablespoonfuls of household flour mixed smoothly in a basin with a half ounce of butter. Should the butter be hard and difficult to mix smooth, place the basin on the stove till the butter is soft enough to handle with a firm spoon. When mixed pour the boiling milk straight into the flour and butter stirring all the time, and always the same way; put back into the double saucepan and stir till it boils, add the cooked carrot and serve very hot as an additional vegetable or as a separate dish. Should the sauce be sticky or too thick judgment which will come with experience will quickly show the error to be a little too much flour or careless mixing. This sauce is also useful to compose a lunch dish with, by adding to it some chopped roast chicken and a thin slice of onion instead of carrots. Serve in a rather deep dish with croutons of fried bread or dry toast round the edge. A tin of prawns can be used instead of chicken in which case a small teaspoonful of anchovy sauce may be added at the last, instead of salt, as the prawns may be already a little salt.

Potatoes are to my mind one of the most ill-used vegetables we have. They require simple care to make them a useful and welcome addition to at least two meals in the day. Too often I have found the greatest carelessness in the cooking of a simple potato. Often at an English inn potatoes are impossible, even more so than other vegetables, and yet we English people have the best potatoes in the world! It is indeed a fact that in the case of the poor potato, God sends the food, and the devil the cooks! One common error is to peel the potatoes hours before they are to be cooked and to leave them in water; another to peel them (because the weather is cold) in quite hot water, or, worse still, then shut them down in a saucepan on the side of the stove ever so long before they are required. In this way the potato is spoilt before it has even boiled. It is quite possible to use up even cold potatoes in an appetising manner. None need ever be wasted if the following hints are taken and the sound advice of many years' experience is followed. For new potatoes pick out those as much of a size as possible, carefully scrape them, remove any eyes, rinse in clear cold water and put into enough boiling water to cover well; add a sprig of mint (in one piece) and a piece of salt put in a saucepan preferably not iron and boil gently till tender which can easily be found by trying them with a fork. When cooked, strain, remove the mint, put into the saucepan a knob of butter while the potatoes are there and serve as quickly as possible with a little finely chopped parsley on them. The object of the butter is not only to improve the taste and appearance but it also helps to prevent the sort of preserved taste one so often gets in hotel cooking. As the potatoes get older it is better to put them to boil into cold water, and directly they are too old to scrape freely, no mint is necessary or advisable. Some potatoes are best strained before they are quite cooked and then shut down in the saucepan to finish in their steam. If the potatoes are not to be used at once (say when a meal is delayed longer than expected for some reason), it is a good idea either to rice them in a ricer or to mash them. In that way they will not have an unpleasant taste and can be kept hot for some time and still be quite palatable.

Often one has some cold potatoes left say from lunch, cut them into slices, put about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an oz. of butter into a frying pan and when melted and hot lay each slice of potato flat in the hot butter,

fry quickly over a brisk fire till they attain a golden-brown colour. Care must be taken that they do not burn.

Cold potatoes can also be used for hot cakes as follows: Take the remains of any boiled potatoes, break them into a bowl, take a breakfast cup and a half of flour (for this quantity of flour about the value of eight potatoes would be necessary) rub them smoothly into the flour, add two ounces of butter, salt, a little baking-powder (unless self-raising flour is used) mix as for pastry with a little milk (sour will do) and if possible an egg beaten into it, form into small cakes and bake on larded paper in a quick oven, serve hot with sugar and butter to be spread on them.

For fried potatoes care should be taken to follow these directions carefully: Peel your potatoes and cut them into slices about one-half an inch thick, then into strips, each slice let us say into four, let them lay in a bowl of cold water till wanted for frying. Take a large deep frying pan in which you have melted one-fourth pound of best tub lard, place over a quick fire taking care not to let it burn, and when it is ready (which is easily found out by dropping one piece of potato into the fat—it should sizzle at once), take the potatoes out of the water by hand and drop straight into the boiling lard. Turn carefully from time to time with a knife blade. Remove them with a slice into a vegetable dish in which there is a strainer (stone for preference), and place in the oven with an open door till required; but serve as soon as possible. Never put the cover on the dish or allow the oven door to be shut as the potatoes would not then keep quite crisp. Never add salt till ready in the dish, when a little should be sprinkled over the potatoes.

For straw potatoes proceed in the same way; only these will require less time for cooking and will need to be cut very much thinner and smaller.

For soufflé potatoes cut them into thin slices and dry them on a clean cloth. Lay them in a little milk for a moment and then put them into the boiling fat straight out of the milk. If these directions are carefully followed there should be a crisp brown bubble on each side of the slice of the potato. These also must not be covered or have the oven door closed on them.

There is also another simple way of treating an old potato. Often toward the end of the year when one's potatoes run large and we are anxious to give a dish a dainty appearance we find that the large potato served whole looks clumsy. If the potatoes are carefully peeled and any unsightly blemishes are removed such as the eye or as so often happens there are bluey patches due to a bruise perhaps on the potatoes otherwise perfectly sound, the following hint may be found both useful and economical. Take a stout teaspoon and scoop spoonfuls from the outside of a big potato. (The broken remains can be used in soup say either beef or mutton stock. Recipe for this with soups.) When you have sufficient potatoes ready you can either fry in dripping (in which case do not attempt to make them crisp) or boil them very gently, or bake them under a joint, etc. They will be best baked or fried. They can then be served laid round a dish of fish (fried[Pg 19] or boiled) or round a dish of roast meat previously carved and laid down the centre of a dish or with kidneys and bacon or with liver and bacon.

Celery used as a vegetable will be found very palatable cooked in the following manner. Take two or three heads of celery, wash carefully in fresh cold water and a little salt, have ready any little beef, veal, or chicken stock, bring this to a boil and cook the celery in it. From 30 to 40 minutes should be long enough to render the celery soft. Serve in a vegetable dish with the gravy poured over it, sufficient only to just cover, having previously stirred a teaspoonful of cornflour mixed with cold water into it.

Beet-root may be prepared either cold to serve with cold beef or as a hot vegetable dish best served with roast mutton.

For cold, have four or five round small beet-roots washed, handling them carefully and taking the greatest care not to break off any tender shoots, and avoiding cutting the leaf-end too near the top of the beet-root. Have a saucepan large enough to take the beet-root without breaking it. Boil gently with a good piece of salt from 40 minutes to an hour, or even a little longer, according to the size. Prick with a carving fork to see if quite tender, then lay them on a strainer and when cool enough to hold in the fingers remove the peel and cut into thin rings. Lay them in a dish of vinegar (a deep glass dish is best), dust over two teaspoonfuls of powdered sugar, and allow to get thoroughly cold before serving. The object of the sugar in the vinegar is to draw the colour out of the beet-root and to remove the sourness. More or less sugar may be used according to individual taste but the proportion given is generally right.

The beet-root already boiled may be used for the following dish:

Cut into a little thicker slices, then into strips, then into little squares. Have ready in a deep enamel frying pan a quantity of melted butter, put the diced beet-root into it with a pinch of salt and a little cream (or, if not available, a little milk) and bring the mixture to a boil, taking care not to break the vegetable when stirring with a knife blade. Mix a teaspoonful of cornflour with a little milk, stir into the beet-root while on the stove, serve round the dish of sliced mutton or separately very hot.

Leeks can often be made to take the place of onions and are a very useful vegetable cooked in either of the following ways. Take from twelve to twenty leeks, wash well in cold water, being careful to remove all grit. It will be found necessary nearly always to split them, to be sure that they are quite clean. Stew them in beef stock till quite tender. (This vegetable does not require any soda in the cooking and is best cooked in stock.) Strain and serve when quite tender. Another way is to cut each leek into four, lengthwise, and bake in dripping, as directed to do with the onion.

The Drumhead or white cabbage has no appearance if cooked only as a cabbage, but a useful dish may be made in the following manner. Take a large cabbage, remove the white stiff stalk running down the leaf with a sharp knife. Put the leaves into a large saucepan of boiling water, cook as for ordinary cabbage except that the leaves will all be separate. When tender spread on a large dish to cool. Prepare some finely minced meat, beef, ham, veal or mutton, chicken or lamb, about half a teacup of freshly boiled rice salted to taste. (The value of two tablespoonfuls

of rice will be enough to make half a teacup.) The rice to have been boiled in water and not too soft. Mix with the minced meat and having spread each cabbage leaf open, fill with the mixture, leaving enough of the leaf clear to roll round the meat. Have a deep frying pan on the fire half full of either beef or mutton stock, bring to a boil and place each stuffed leaf in the stock and cook for ten minutes; remove with a slice on to a deep dish and serve at once very hot.

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## THE GREEN HAT

A Drama in Four Acts, by Michael Arlen

The GoogleBooks etext of THE BEST PLAYS OF 1925-26, Edited by Burns Mantle

MR. ARLEN'S famous play " about decency, " extracted from his equally famous novel, had already achieved triumphs of popular acclaim in Detroit and Chicago before New York was given a peek at it. Which, in considerable measure, bespeaks a national appeal.

The New York attitude, however, assumes that no play has really been produced in America until Broadway has seen it , which means exactly nothing to any one except the professional New Yorker. The fact is stated here merely to cover what may appear to be the belated appearance of this fascinating drama in this particular year book.

" The Green Hat" was first presented in New York at the Broadhurst Theatre the night of September 15, 1925 .

With the exception of the substitution of Margalo Gillmore for Ann Harding in the role of Venice, Miss Harding having been drafted to play the heroine in a Niccodemi melodrama called " Stolen Fruit," the cast was the same as that employed in the West, with Katherine Cornell as its shining light. The reception of the play in New York was enthusiastic without being at all exciting. The reviews echoed the tone of that reception. The performance counted

for more than the play with most of the writers. The drama was accepted, but with definite reservations.

The play, going back of the novel to the incident of Boy Fenwick's death, opens in the sitting room of a third floor suite in the Hotel Vendome, Deauville. It is an [data loss] from its right wall, as one enters at back, onto a balcony, and double doors letting into a bedroom at the left.

It is the summer of 1913, and late afternoon . The maid, who has been packing the great wardrobe trunk at the back, has stepped into the bedroom for more of her mistress' clothes. As she returns with these over her arm she encounters a prying young person who has surreptitiously climbed the stairway uniting the out side balconies and boldly entered the suite. He is a reporter, and he is in search of facts that have been denied him in the hotel office. There is, he believes, there must be something back of the story as given out, and he refuses to be " shucked " out again , as the maid threatens to have him , until he has the facts.

" At the present moment all London is plastered with placards announcing ' A Society Tragedy,' 'Honeymoon Death, ' 'Was It a Suicide? ' " he reports. "So you had better tell me the truth or I'll be adding 'Was It Murder ? ' "

He is a very persistent young pressman , and neither the maid nor the hotel manager can do much with him .

It takes Dr. Masters, who shortly arrives, “ a feverish, charming, abrupt, absent-minded” sort of person, finally to be rid of the intruder, which the doctor accomplishes by promising to meet him later in the lobby and tell him all he wants to know .

But the reporter is not the only curious person in that group. Now that they are alone the manager himself would like Dr. Masters to confide a few facts to him. Isn't there really something behind all this mystery ?

“ Please don't misunderstand me, Doctor, ” the manager hurriedly adds. “ Look at it from my angle. All the English society papers have been writing for weeks past of the approaching marriage of the Honorable Mr. Fenwick and Miss Iris March , the most popular young man and the most beautiful girl in society.

( Dr. Masters makes an impatient gesture - moves up and down right.) Please don't misunderstand me, Doctor! Let me continue. These lovely young people arrived here last night to pass their honeymoon in my hotel. For weeks this suite has been reserved for them . And here last night this hotel was on tiptoe and upside-down to see them . And then — ( Dr. Masters stops.) — at three o'clock this morning, the night porter was brought out of his lodge by a scream . He says he will hear that scream all his life . The scream of a soul in agony.

What did he see ? Looking up he sees an angel of loveliness staring at the ground as though she was looking into hell. And on the stones of the courtyard was the bridegroom , dead where he fell. Doctor, that is the story. That is all we know."

It is all very mystifying and terribly, terribly tragic for the beautiful young lady. “ Such an accident to happen on the loveliest night of her life !” And there must be some explanation. People do not fall out of hotel windows —not just fall out. “ What shall I say to my directors ?” persists the manager. “ Was he drunk ? ' Did he get dizzy and fall out ? Doctor, do you think the poor young man was drunk ? ” “ My dear Monsieur Cavelle, ” answers the doctor, “ I

know no more about it than you do

;except, of course that I have examined the body. Death was instantaneous, I should say — and that is all there is to say. I saw Mrs. Fenwick for the first time in my life this morning when you yourself called me in —and I can tell you, Cavelle, I wasn't pleased at being called in - for I am here on a holiday from my practice in Paris . . . perhaps he had taken half a glass of champagne too much young men do, on memorable nights.

But it is unthinkable to press Mrs. Fenwick too closely with questions at the moment. She is almost very ill---

The doors at back burst open " to admit a lean , dark, passionate-looking young man. He looks ill, excited,

dangerous, reckless, and angry. He wears a felt hat, of which the brim in front is turned down over his left eye .”

They think he is another reporter, but they discover a moment later that he is Mrs. Fenwick's brother, Gerald March. A wildly excited brother come to demand an explanation of his sister and determined to have it. Nor does he pay much heed, in his hysterical, slightly alcoholized condition, to Dr. Masters' warning.

you out of it.

DR. MASTERS - Your sister in that room, is very near a nervous breakdown; and if you don't pull yourself together before she comes into this room, I'll just fire --

MARCH ( with smothered rage ) And I'll tell you something, Doctor. This morning I picked up a paper in London and read of Boy's death

DR. MASTERS — Boy ?

MARCH ( rises furiously, crosses left with jerky hysterical movement) — Boy Fenwick , you fool — my sister's husband —my friend ! ( Turns, almost threateningly.)

Look here, I want you to understand something —Boy and I were friends. Got that ? Friends, friends, friends !

And now he's dead ! He marries my sister and within twenty -four hours he's dead ! (Masters tries to calm him . ) Look here, I don't know what I'm saying. I

know that, but I'd be saying just the same if I did know what I was saying.

MASTERS -- Steady, March !

MARCH —Listen, Doctor ! You must listen ! I never wanted Iris to marry Boy, I knew it wouldn't do. Boy Fenwick was the best and cleanest man in the world, while all we Marches are rotten, just rotten, and Iris is the worst of us. Oh, I know Iris ! Damn it all , we're twins. (Masters moves towards him .) Listen, Doctor, I tried to stop her marriage, but they just called me a silly baby. Iris never loved Boy.

MASTERS

( up to March left very quietly) — Steady, March, steady.

MARCH

( eager to explain, nothing can stop his words) No, listen! She never loved him. I know she didn't.

She just took Boy on the rebound after some one else had given her the chuck . Oh , I know all about it ! He's downstairs now, Napier Harpenden -- the man Iris loves - loves hell ! Iris never loved any one ! She and Napier were going to be married till his snob of an old father squashed it. Wouldn't let Napier marry one of the rotten Marches. ( Almost proud .) And so she married Boy - and now Boy's dead. (Appeals to doc tor, gets no help ; passes to sofa helplessly.) Oh, God, Boy isn't dead . It's like a waking hell to think that he's dead. ( Sinks down. ) I say, Doctor, what's all this about ? I don't understand.

DR. MASTERS

( crosses to sofa , hand on March's shoulder. Gently) — It's quite simple and very sad, March. Your friend was looking out of the window and just fell out. That is all. ( Pats his shoulder, turns away.)

MARCH (rapidly, eagerly) --But look here, Doctor, one doesn't fall out of windows -- I mean you read in papers of

people falling out of windows -- but it never happens to one's friends. I say, I don't understand (Helplessly.) God, I wish you'd speak slowly !

DR. MASTERS

(turns, a very professional attitude covering his awkward attempt at lying) —March, I'm afraid Boy Fenwick must have had a glass too much

MARCH ( jumps up -shouting) -I knew it, I knew it ! I've been waiting for something like that, I knew there was a dirty lie somewhere. Look here, this is Iris' doing ; she put you up to saying that. Do you mean to stand there and tell me Boy was drunk ? Boy ? (Dan gerous.) I say, if Iris says that to me, I'll ---

DR. MASTERS ( sharply ) —Mrs. Fenwick has said nothing of the sort. It was merely that I and the hotel

manager MARCH ( leaning over chair ; heedless, determined , wild ) —Look here, Boy never touched more than a

glass of anything. He hated drink. He thought it un clean. I say, I don't understand this. ( Screamingly.))

I can smell lies — I can simply smell them —

There are other callers. They are the Harpendens and Hilary Townshend — Napier Harpenden, “ young,

handsome, serious, feverish .” His father, Sir Maurice, “ taunt, neat, white-haired . ” Townshend, “ tall, elderly, grey. ”

They are all friends of Mrs. Fenwick. They have come from England, Sir Maurice explains, immediately on hearing the news. Napier and Townshend are espe cially anxious. And they are distressed at the hysteria of Gerald and his wild mutterings, charging them with their several personal interests in his sister, Iris, or their lack of them , and defying them to keep him quiet. Dr. Masters is trying to tell them such facts relating to Fenwick's death as will satisfy their inquiry and has just reached a statement that in his estimation there has not been, and is not now, any question of suicide, when Iris Fenwick, quietly entering the room at back, denies his authority for that statement.

She does not move as they turn and look at her.

“ Her attitude is of one weary beyond enduring, older than her years, unconscious of personalities at the moment.”

She is thankful for Dr. Masters' intended kindness. Grateful for the interest of Napier and Hilary. Resent ful of the presence of her old enemy, Sir Maurice. Dis tressed at the condition of mind and body in which she finds Gerald , who is twin to her, “ both part of the same beastly, pitiful thing” as he says, and once so fond of her. There is no love in Gerald's attitude now. Again and again , wildly and insistently he demands to know how Boy Fenwick died . Nor will he be put off, either by the others or by the painfully apparent reluctance of Iris to answer him. And finally he has his way.

MARCH (looking up suddenly - desperately) —You people have got to let me talk in peace for a moment or two. I know you're nearly all older than I am and much too old to be able to bear the truth — but this beastly business must be settled. You see, I don't like any of you people. You've all got Alma Maters instead of minds, and Union Jacks instead of hearts, and so I want to leave you as soon as I can . ( Fiercely, noticing no one is listening.) Oh, damnation !! Listen a moment! ( Sir Maurice turns from window , Napier sits chair left . )

( More calmly again ; almost as though speaking of God. )

The only person I ever met in my life for whom I had any admiration was Boy Fenwick. That's why I'm so

excited now , but you mustn't think I'm mad, I'm not a bit mad. Look here, I admired Boy because he was the only person I've ever met who had really clean ideals and wasn't a bit of a prig or anything like that. And another thing: Boy was like a god in his contempt for shoddiness, mental ( Suddenly pauses, looking at Iris, intent and inquisitorial.) and physical shoddiness. He wouldn't put up with things, Boy wouldn't. All we people put up with things, but Boy wasn't like that. He tried to fight what he couldn't bear, and, if he couldn't fight it, he -Iris, are you listening ?

IRIS (with difficulty ) — Yes

MARCH ( pursuing his point pitilessly ) - Look here, if Boy couldn't fight it, if the thing he didn't like was too big for him to fight or too dirty –

IRIS Gerald ! Don't hate me too much !

MARCH —Boy would throw himself out of the window, any window would do, the first that came to hand.

Wouldn't he, Iris ? ( Annoyed. ) I say, don't look so sulky when I ask you a civil question !

NAPIER (bitterly) - Shut up , Gerald !

MARCH - Iris, why did Boy die? ( A deep pause.)

IRIS ( with difficulty ) - Boy died —he died for ( Suddenly in a clear voice, turning away from Gerald .)

for purity — (Masters and Sir Maurice turn. ) ( They stare at her astounded, shocked. Napier gives her an agonized, pleading look.) ( Gerald March awakes first and shivers in silence.)

MARCH (wildly -a cheer ) - Bravo Boy ! Hurrah, hurrah ! ( Falls back sobbing and laughing hysterically .)

( Townsend and Dr. Masters, together. )

TOWNSHEND ( low ) – Iris are you mad!

DR. MASTERS ( jerkily ) — Gentlemen , I don't think you-- ( But Iris looks at him , as though to command his silence .)

SIR MAURICE ( sternly) -- Iris, take care of what you are saying ! Do you want to drive your brother quite crazy ?

IRIS ( contemptuously -- not bothering to look at him )

You know very well , Sir Maurice, that you are thanking God for this moment, for its driving Napier and me even further apart.

Sir MAURICE (harshly ) —It's of Boy you should be thinking now --- not of Napier !

MARCH (more calmly — but still not normal) Then I was right - Boy killed himself.. ( A pause. The brother and sister stare at each other.)

IRIS —Yes, Boy killed himself.

MARCH ( shouting, with a gesture ) —For purity! (Weakly -- brokenly. ) Yes, Boy would kill himself for that. It's the only thing he would kill himself for -for purity !

NAPIER ( jumping up and crossing to Iris ) — Iris, you don't know what you're saying ! Don't let Gerald bully you, he's mad. (March jumps up rudely, crosses right to window .) Iris, don't crucify yourself just to let Gerald preserve his hero- worship intact. ( Pleading.) Of course Boy didn't kill himself — It's madness to say that. (Takes her hand. She draws it away, rises quickly –afraid .)

IRIS (her back to Napier ) — No, Napier, no ! Don't make it any harder for me ! ( Seeing Sir Maurice.)



Take your son away, Sir Maurice — quickly, quickly! Remember the rotten Marches! I might still snatch him from you even now !

TOWNSHEND — Iris, for pity's sake don't be so bitter !

IRIS (helplessly ) -Oh, I'm not bitter ! ( Turns and looks at the men. ) But I see I'm going to be very lonely.

You're all looking at me with such cruel eyes .

Gerald is exultant. His friend has died for a principle. Boy's great spirit was crushed, probably by the soiled confessions of his bride that she had known other lovers before him . Even Napier couldn't forgive that.

NAPIER ( low to Iris) — Did you expect me to forgive you ?

IRIS ( tonelessly ) — There's no question of forgiveness in these things . There never is. One loves or doesn't love. It's quite simple, really.

NAPIER ( rapidly, feverishly. Hilary stands uncomfortably ) — I did love you, Iris ! I thought we could wait, I thought you would have time to prove

to my father that you weren't just another of the rotten Marches. But you didn't wait, did you ? Why ? Why couldn't you wait? I can understand your marrying Boy -not two years after you and I parted — but I

can't — I can't understand how even before you married him, you took - Oh God ! ( Rises and turns back left.

The idea is more than he can bear .)

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IRIS [data loss] the room ) -- Napier, didn't I say to you, eighteen to eighteen, that day when you

told me your father wouldn't let you marry me: "Napier, I think I have a body that burns for love. I shall burn it with love, but I shall never say, 'I love you to any man but you.'" And I never have, Napier, and I never will.

MARCH ( across desk, triumphantly ) —So you didn't love Boy then ?

IRIS -- No, I didn't love Boy, but Boy loved me as Napier never loved me. Boy loved me terribly. ( A little bitterly .)

NAPIER ( turns and advances towards Iris. Scowling as he always does when suffering) - You can't have anything cleaner than love - this love, anyway, the love I had for you. And now, Iris , you've thrown dirt all over my love. I thought fine things, fine sacrifices for you -and you've made my love as dirty as all Sodom and Gomorrah. ( Intensely.) I will never forgive you, Iris.

IRIS ( rises.) (Low to Napier ) — Go now — please, at once ! (Wearily.) There is nothing more to say.

There is a note of rebellion in Dr. Masters' tone as he asks the right to speak, to tell them the truth of Boy Fenwick's death, but Iris silences him . And now they are gone —Gerald as wildly as he entered, cruelly flinging into the face of his sister the charge of harlotry. All gone save Napier and Masters, over by the windows. Napier has lingered, still bewildered, still in search of an explanation from Iris that will in effect explain. He approaches her now.

NAPIER —What is it you want, Iris ?

IRIS ( she does not look at him ) — Now, nothing. Or everything. It's the same thing. ( Suddenly she looks at him .) You wouldn't understand, Napier. I want decency.

NAPIER ( down centre.) ( Appears astonished ) -You - want decency ?

IRIS ( with a small laugh ) — Oh, I knew you wouldn't understand! I don't mean your kind of decency. I'm not sure what kind of decency I do mean , but it's not your kind or your father's kind. The decency I mean has nothing to do with the playing fields of Eton, the Battle of Waterloo or the Silent Navy - it has nothing to do with how to behave when people are watching you, but it has something to do with how to behave when no one is watching you. ( With a cry .) That's what I want, Napier! The final, the ultimate decency!

(Helplessly, as he moves to say something.) Oh, don't say anything! Goodbye my dear one. My love goes with you. God bless you ! He's blessed me — with my love for you! ( Napier scowling, is about to say some thing, but Iris suddenly covers her face with her hands.)

For pity's sake, just go, go — !!

NAPIER (bitterly, his hand over his eyes) - If you knew how I've loved you ! Iris, I'd have died for you !

IRIS ( very low ) —Yes, like Boy -

NAPIER ( helplessly, bitterly ) - Oh, God ! you sneer at everything! ( Exit centre back .)

( Iris has not looked at him for some time. She realizes he has gone. )

IRIS ((blankly) – He's gone.

MASTERS ( advances right back of desk ) —Yes.

Didn't you tell him to ?

IRIS ( wildly ) — He's gone there he was and he's

gone ! Napier! Napier ! My dear ! My dear ! ( Starts up centre to door, but stops, dropping into chair .)

MASTERS ( gently but sternly. ) ( A little bewildered ) - Why have you lied ? —Mrs. Fenwick, why have you lied ?

IRIS ( almost accusingly ) -You know why Boy died ?

MASTERS — Yes, I know. I examined the body.

IRIS ( shivering ) — He must have loved me terribly to have ( Eagerly .) But Doctor, he wasn't so bad as you think —really, he wasn't —the marriage was never — is there a word?

MASTERS —Consummated. But I ask you, Mrs. Fenwick, why have you ruined yourself by lying about it ?

IRIS (with a cry, with a sob , with a laugh ) -For purity , Doctor, for purity ! Let's all do one decent thing in life !

The curtain falls.

Ten years later, in Napier Harpenden's bachelor apartment in Mayfair, a small dinner party is just breaking up. It is “ a bachelor's room , but not austere so , and “ it is in an agreeable state of confusion . The

guests, with their cigarettes and liquor, are talking in groups. Hilary Townshend is there, and Venice Pollen .

Venice and Napier are to be married and the dinner is one of the pre-nuptial celebrations.

Venice is young and radiant in her blonde beauty.

She is much in love with Napier, and a little worried about his love for her. As he kisses her now he meets her reproaches of the matter-of-factness of the salute with smiling assurance of his devotion. " Letters of gold could not express my love for you, sweet, " he says, " nor letters of fire my passion."

Still she is not convinced that he loves her " deep down." " I want no quibbling, Napier," she says, quite seriously. " Do you really love me so much that you think of me before breakfast ? That's the real test of love, whether or not one thinks of some one before breakfast."

Napier's reassurances are playful, but earnest, and Venice is content. She would feel better, however, if he would solemnly promise her that nothing, " not even a better offer from an American , " would stop him from marrying her in three days' time.

The other guests, including Sir Maurice Harpenden , are in from the dining room and the talk turns to Gerald March. That unhappy young man , from the latest reports any of them have of him, is dying of drink, and double-pneumonia, in a slum .

Of Iris March little has been seen but much has been heard in the last ten years. She has been in England very little, spending her time in Paris, Rome and the Riviera. They are all a little reluctant to discuss Iris before Venice, and this is a reluctance Venice resents .

" It seems she goes about in a yellow Hispano-Suiza car and breaks men's hearts , " Venice reports. " Oh, why don't people tell me anything? Why are people so beastly to virgins ? . . . You see, I'm terribly interested in this legendary Iris Fenwick because of the terrible death of her husband — Oh, years before my time, and because Napier adored her, also years before my time, else I'd scratch her eyes out."

But there is little satisfaction in any of their replies.

Sir Maurice, for one, finds the subject distasteful. Why should they stand about discussing the sort of mess Iris has made of her life ? Which irritates Napier.

" It seems to me, sir , " he checks his father, " that as neither you nor I know anything about Iris for the last ten years, except by hearsay, that we have no particular right to discuss her. "

Now the party has broken up and the guests are gone.

All except Hilary. It is while he and Napier are having a last drink that Napier's man announces the arrival of a lady. A lady who gives no name, but who wears a green hat and is driving a yellow car.

Their astonishment is complete and Townshend is worried . He questions the advisability of Napier's seeing Iris again . It doesn't impress him as a discreet thing to do under the circumstances, consider

worried . He questions the advisability of Napier's seeing Iris again . It doesn't impress him as a discreet thing to do under the circumstances, considering that the hour is late — past midnight in fact. But to Napier, Hilary is a good deal of an old woman .

Iris is dressed for motoring. " For a few seconds she stands framed in the doorway looking at Napier.

She is impersonal, calm, grave." Her greetings are effusive. She has seen neither of them for so long a

time. She has not changed, Hilary thinks. But Napier is not so sure. She seems more beautiful to him . That

pleases her.

Iris has come to ask their help. She has just heard of Gerald's illness and has motored immediately from Paris.

But now Gerald refuses to see her. Perhaps one of them would see him for her, and see if there is any.

thing she can do.

Napier can do little. Gerald has outlawed him , too.

But he might see Hilary. That's an idea. Let Hilary find Gerald while Iris waits for him there.

Again Hilary is doubtful. Should he leave them there alone ? " I am not sure that I want you and Napier to make friends again ," he warns Iris , quite frankly.

But Napier makes light of his objections. There is a taxi outside and he will be back in a minute. In an hour or two at most. He can take a key to the flat and will not have to call the man when he returns.

Hilary goes finally, but not before he has told Iris of Napier's wedding arrangements. He is to be married in three days. " Iris does not move, does not look up, does not speak ," at this announcement. " But she seems to take one deep breath ."

When Napier and she are alone there is an awkward silence between them, broken as she wishes him happiness, a very great happiness, in his approaching marriage.

Nervously, his voice even and toneless, he accepts her good wishes. Soon he is telling her of Venice. There is a picture of her published in a recent issue of the Tatler.

Venice is beautiful, Iris agrees. She's everything, Napier insists , gaily. " She has such clean eyes," Iris admits, turning suddenly from the picture. " They frighten me " Sometimes they frighten me," he mutters. Impulsively she turns and faces him, her attitude almost maternal.

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IRIS -Aren't you the lucky and successful man altogether! I've heard about you, Napier. You did well in the war — and as I know how frightened you must have been I admire you frightfully for your D.S.O. And now you are doing well in the Foreign Office, you've begun well on what may be a great career and now you are marrying a beautiful and good girl !

Ah, Napier, beloved of the gods !

NAPIER ( staring into her eyes ; low ) --- Iris , don't forget that those whom the gods love die young !

IRIS ( wincing pitifully ) —Are you taunting me with Boy's death ? ( Dropping her arms, looking swiftly about. ) - I thought we might be friends — after ten years! ( She starts to go - Napier stops her -- she stands back to audience. )

NAPIER ( catching her by the arm ; feverishly. As soon as he touches her he draws away frightened saying ) — I'm sorry, Iris . God, I'm a beast ! But I

couldn't help it somehow -- I've thought about that so often — that awful evening at Deauville

IRIS ( low -- the comprehension which her life alone could teach —kindly cynical ) -- I know — and I've learnt one thing on my travels, Napier ; that there's a nasty little beast lurking in every heart.

NAPIER ( a little away; he dares be persistent) -- But I was right, Iris, when I said that those whom the gods love die young.

Of course I mean that something in them dies young Iris ( turns on him unhappy for him ) — But what are you saying, Napier ! Do you mean that something has died in you —in you with your luck and your - looks and your love !

NAPIER ( scowling, low , not looking at her ) – Some how — Well, it's as though one didn't feel the same about things — not so deeply.. ( Iris stares at him for a moment. He is taunting her, for he knows he loves her. )

Iris ( up to him , determined to find the truth ) What is it, Napier ?

NAPIER ( scowling, hesitating) -This love business - looks and your love !

NAPIER ( scowling, low , not looking at her ) – Some how — Well, it's as though one didn't feel the same about things — not so deeply.. ( Iris stares at him for a moment. He is taunting her, for he knows he loves her. )

IRIS ( up to him , determined to find the truth ) What is it, Napier ?

NAPIER ( scowling, hesitating) -This love business - it changes — and yet it doesn't change.

IRIS (not accepting the evasion ) - You've got your Venice -your pretty Venice !

NAPIER ( protesting ) — Oh , of course I love Venice Heavens, she's a darling! ( Suddenly right to Iris — as though it had for long been a hidden secret) — But - it isn't the same as when we were very young - that's what I meant when I said something dies —the fire seems to die !

IRIS (dreaming - sad ) -That first playmate love - that dear playmate love!

NAPIER ( softly ) – Your old word, Iris — you know, I think you must be the only grown-up person left in the world who uses the word “ playmate.”

IRIS ( trying to recover ) –One might as well say phoenix ! – Teach the word “ playmate” to your young wife, Napier. Tell her it's a wedding gift from Iris March — Just the word “ playmate. ” think there are only two really beautiful words in the world : “ play mate” and “ purity ”

(Napier passes a hand over his eyes as though to break the spell. But the spell is strong. They speak as in a dream. )

NAPIER ( a step towards Iris ) - Enchantment --

IRIS ( bitterly ) I have been enchanted all my life by a mirage of happiness — ( Turning on him. ) - Napier, what is happiness ? Do you know ?

NAPIER ( staring at her, he turns the thrust back )

What's love ? Do you know , Iris ? ( Always they stare, absorbed into each other .)

IRIS —Love? Love's a hurricane of pain. That's love.

NAPIER ( intensely ) — Iris, you do something very strange, very – unholy to me.

IRIS (low ) – Unholy ? Unholy! ( Suddenly, violently, bringing her clenched hands to her breast. ) Shall I scratch my face — and make myself ugly? Shall I , Napier ? I've had no fun for my beauty — only

hell. And—now you call me unholy! ( She throws herself onto sofa, leaning against the upstage arm. )

NAPIER ( staring at her) –When I look at you it is as though this world, this England, the laws and the land of England, fade and pass from me like phantoms. They can't be phantoms, Iris. ( Drops on down stage edge of sofa. )

IRIS (desperately ) —They are — cruel , bullying phantoms !

NAPIER ( the words drifting out of a mood, meaning less and meaning everything) — Yes. And when I look at you , it's as though everything but you was unreal —

Iris, who are you ? You're Iris, my first playmate, and then you're Iris , a woman with magic eyes and a

soft white body that beats at my mind like a whip. Iris, it's as though you came from an undiscovered country,

where the stars stream over a sky wider than ours, where the men are strange and strong, where the women

wear their souls like masks on their faces, and their souls know not the truth nor lying, not honor nor dishonor

not good nor evil . Iris, in the land you come from, the women are just themselves — towers of delight in the twilight of the world. Iris, you are a dark angel !

IRIS ( dreaming ) - Listen ! When I was very young,

I was very wise NAPIER ( quickly ) — And now, now aren't we very young ?

IRIS (weary — sad . She says mere words — but her body speaks) — Now we are as old — as old as sand !

Listen . When I was very young I knew that to every man and woman in this world, there is appointed an inheritance if we can but find it , and having found it , if we can but claim it ! And I found my appointed inheritance, but I wasn't strong enough to claim it . Napier, I knew our lives to be coiled together, in love and friendship and understanding, I knew it ! And beyond you there was nothing I wanted. And I loved you, and you loved me, and we were playmates.

Weren't we playmates, Napier? And then one day you stood before me with a white face and you said your father

would not let a Harpenden marry a March. That's all my story. And that's all I know of love.

NAPIER (whispering, fiercely, not daring to believe )

— That's all you know of love ? You to say that, whom men have touched ! You to say that who have let men touch you !

IRIS ( quietly, calmly ) — Yes.

NAPIER ( violently ) – You have made your name in famous in Europe -- and you say " Yes ! ”

When Boy died — like that we judged you an outlaw. And

since then you've proved pretty thoroughly that we were right. (Contemptuously .) — Did you enjoy your lovers, Iris ?

IRIS ( calmly ) — No. I always felt unfaithful to you.

NAPIER ( sneering ) — And so you always felt unfaith ful to me !

IRIS ( dreaming --- collecting a thought ) —That was my punishment. You see I'm not really bad — I'm not even bad — I only misbehave.

NAPIER ( suddenly, his hand to his eyes) -Oh, God, how you torment!

IRIS ( bitterly — wisely, not altogether calm ) —This is a world of a thousand delights. I have known them all but one, the one worth knowing, the delight of being allowed to love. This is a world of a thousand punishments ! I have known them all .

NAPIER ( harshly ) —And whose fault was that but yours ?

IRIS -Whose fault but mine that I have given myself to men as I wished in desire, in disdain, in disgust.

NAPIER (his head in his hands) — For pity's sake !

IRIS ( continuing) --- But I've never said " I love you " lo any man but you. I married Boy because he loved me and because I wanted love, because my body, this body, was hungry for

love and born to love and must love. And I thought I would destroy my body with love's delight. (For the first time she herself seems to realize the truth .) But this moment is proving to me that I haven't quite done that yet.

NAPIER ( raising his head and looking at her, a plea ) - Iris, is there no difference between right and wrong ?

You must tell me! For when I look at you I seem to think there is no difference. ( Slowly Iris nods, thoughtfully, and she smiles a small smile. )

IRIS There is. Who should know that better than I ? ( A pause. They stare into each other. Then Iris awakes. She jumps up in terror, backing away .)

I must go. Why did I come ! Why did you make me take my hat off ! (Napier rises.) ( Her eyes again catch

Napier's intent look and she cries sharply, her hand on her breast, desperate. ) But this is hell ! ( And Napier takes her and kisses her. Then it is as though she pushes him away and falls backwards, sideways, to catch against the sideboard , to rest against the side board, the palm of one hand pressed against the edge, the other to her breast, tightly ; and she shivers, with closed eyes.)

IRIS (whispering ) - It hurts !

NAPIER (follows her feverish, tormented, reckless ) - I've thought of you, thought of you, thought of you.

Then I thought I'd forgotten you but you were always there, white and soft and remote - you were always there, in my blood, and in lonely moments I've heard your voice, whispering — whispering dreams of better things. ( Iris is still, like a dark flower in a room , her eyes closed, her hand tight pressed to one breast .)

IRIS (whispering , crying) – I am weak, weak !

NAPIER ( feverishly ) – What is it, Iris ? What do you want ?

IRIS What do I want! You, darling! ( She takes his head in her hands, drawing him to her. As they

kiss she reaches for light switch , and presses it. )

The lights go out and in the blackness the curtain falls . When it rises again a moment later the room is in a half light — a clock is striking. It is two o'clock .

There is the sound of someone entering the door. It is Hilary letting himself in . He calls Napier's name in muffled tones, switches on the lights and sinks, a little wearily into a chair. Napier comes from the adjoining room , quietly, a little stealthily. He is about to pick up Iris ' green hat from the sofa when he sees Hilary.

Evasively he tries to cover his confusion. Iris has gone, he assures Hilary, “ knowing it is a useless lie, but forced to say something. ”

Townshend thinks it strange that she should have left her car behind. The battery was run down, Napier explains. But Hilary is of no mood to be made a fool of.

Gerald is dead, he reports. He had helped the char woman take care of the body and notify the authorities.

And now, what of them ? " Other things have died tonight, too, Napier," he says, bitterly .

" I don't understand. What ? "

" Honor. That's all."

He will not be put off. " You don't think, do you, that I want to stay another minute in this vile atmosphere of

treachery ? I have something to do here, Napier. I have fool of.

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treachery ? I have something to do here, Napier. I have known you, Iris and Gerald all your lives. Gerald is gone. Iris is what she is. But I think you are still worth saving."

Then Iris comes from the inner room, and faces them .

" She does not flinch. She speaks in a tired, low voice, mocking as though at herself, God, everything. "

She has heard Hilary accuse them of robbing Venice of her inheritance. "'And I , Hilary —am I without an inheritance ? Please, Hilary, mayn't I have the tiniest bit of inheritance - a moment's worth, a second's worth ?

Would Venice, who is so rich, miss such a little bit ? "

She calms Napier when he would defend her against Hilary's taunting reminder of what she is and has been . She is a little stunned by Gerald's death , and yet wonders if Gerald has not finally broken the March curse —perhaps he has been let off aa lot by dying.

As for herself, she is quite free now. " I've done the one thing I've always wanted to do, and I'm free, Hilary.

Do you know what freedom means to a woman ? It means that no one in particular wants her very much . "

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TOWNSHEND ( still a man ) -I understood from the common gossip of the day that you had your lovers. (Napier jumping up in, what is for him, a rage. )

NAPIER (furiously ) — Shut up ! ( Crosses left to Iris .) I am your lover, Iris.

IRIS ( softly, giving him her hand) -- I am glad of what we have done, Napier, glad !

NAPIER ( suddenly desperate ) — You mustn't go, you can't go !

TOWNSHEND ( turning on them sharply ) — Have you no shame, Iris ! And you, Napier --

NAPIER (turning to him, savagely ) -Hilary, for pity's sake be quiet ! ( He drops into armchair. )

IRIS (drops on to her knees on floor beside him. )

(Smiling, broken voiced, very wise.) — Sweet, of course I must go ! Think, Napier ! Close your eyes and think,



for you won't be able to think with them open, for my eyes love you so. Are you thinking now ?  
What use

am I to you, what use are you to me, with the burden of your broken promise and your Venice's  
broken heart all ways on my mind ? What use, dear, what use ? Shall I

whisper enchantments in your ear, shall I whisper to you of magic joys, of love's surrender and  
love's delight - and drag you after me like a phantom under a spell ?

Oh, I don't want you like that, I won't have you like that !

Dear Napier, you aren't the sort of man who can break promises and live happily ever after. Your  
eyes are like dark ruins, and about the ruins I can see Venice walking.

Shall we run away together so that I can always see sad Venice walking about in the ruins of  
your eyes ?

It's too late for me now, sweet, too late ! ( Sudden out burst of bitterness.)

IRIS — Oh, why didn't you love me enough when we were children ?

NAPIER (desperately -- clutching her hand ) — There - must be some way out of this — there  
must be ! I can't bear you to sacrifice yourself again. I love you !

TOWNSHEND ( coming down to them , at first persuasive ) —Napier, you are bound to Venice  
by the strongest bond that can hold a decent man - her love for you. As I look at you now, I see  
standing beside you Venice and Venice's children !

IRIS ( stiffens, rises in agony) — Dear Jesus!

TOWNSHEND ( bitterly, angrily ) – Iris, when I look at you, I see the squalid glitter of Deauville  
and the Rivi.

You are not of our life — Iris. I don't think you want to be. At any rate, you have forfeited your  
place.

You must leave Napier and Venice to make their peace with each other, to make their good life  
together — the life they and I understand, Iris . You must leave Napier in peace to be worthy of  
Venice's children ! ( Iris looks at Napier, then draws her hand away desperately moves to table,  
grabbing her coat, she strikes out, slamming door.) ( As Iris reaches door the curtain falls. )

### ACT III

Nine months later, in a convent- nursing home on one of the outer boulevards of Paris, the  
attendants are put

ting things straight for the night. It is a quiet, gray place, “ austere and cold, but not ill -lit.”

Through

stone arches the doors letting into sick rooms along a corridor are seen , and through the center  
one of these nuns pass from time to time, quietly. One carries in a huge bouquet of red roses,  
and emerges a moment later with a chart on which she is finishing her report.

Dr. Conrad Masters bustles in, plainly irritated, the same " restless, testy , abrupt" Masters that  
he was in Deauville the night he attended Iris Fenwick ten years before .

In the inner room Iris March lies desperately ill, yet the chart convinces Masters that all she  
needs is sleep,

a little normal sleep. And she won't sleep, Sister Virginia reports. She is waiting for someone  
—waiting and hugging the roses. “ I've never seen anyone look at roses with such hungry eyes,  
” she says.

Masters' orders are that Iris shall see no one. From downstairs Hilary Townshend sends an eager plea to be admitted . But Masters is reluctant to let him come up.

And when he does let him come he refuses to permit him to go farther than the entrance hall.

Townshend is anxious and curious. What is the nature of Iris' illness ? Is it true she has had an operation ?

Hasn't he some rights as an old friend ? " I've known her since she was a child," he reasons.

But Masters is unmoved. " Your knowing her since she was a child simply means that you know her well enough to disprove of her, but not well enough to understand her ," he counters.

Hilary is persistent, and finally Masters tells

After all , Iris had scribbled instructions on a paper that if Hilary should call they were to be "nice" to him .

Iris is ill of septic poisoning, following the birth of a child, Masters testily admits. She wanted the child above everything, even when Masters warned her that her constitution would not stand it. It was the only thing she did want. And now she has been very ill for ten days. And the child is dead .

"We beat the septic poisoning in spite of her, " Masters reports. " But can we make her want to live ! Nothing left to live for, see ? She wanted that child. Child dead why live ? Can't have either the child or her young man

" Young man ? "

" Oh, you remember — feverish - looking boy at Deau ville. Napier - Napier Harpenden. ... Good Lord ,

women ! What's the difference between one man and another ? Silly asses ! But it's him she wants — all the the time — " Napier, Napier ! " - Keeps on at it. I wired him to come over yesterday."

" You wired him! But he's married ! Been married nearly a year !"

" Well, I can't help his troubles. My duty is to my patient. And she's got to be given something to live for."

When Napier arrives Venice is with him . He is terribly nervous and rushes to Masters for news of Iris,

and Masters leads him away to explain the cause of the telegram .

Venice is anxious, too, and bewildered. What is it all about ?

Why, she demands of Townshend, is Napier so worried about Mrs. Fenwick ? They are very old friends, she knows that. But why has he sat all day, so white and worried ? Why has he made her come with him ? Is Naps in love with Mrs. Fenwick ?

TOWNSHEND ( a little sarcastic ) Naps is in love with you, my dear.

VENICE ( impatiently ) — Oh, I know that ! But can a man be in love with two women at the same time quite differently. I'm not an idiot.

TOWNSHEND — No, dear, you're certainly not an idiot.

VENICE ( dangerously ) . —But you're treating me like one, Hilary ! ( Bitterly . ) —As far as I can see every man treats a woman like an idiot until she's had at least

four children or seven lovers. A woman with just a husband is looked on as a joke. (Suddenly saying with all her heart) —Oh, how I hate the very idea of Iris Fenwick! ( She turns away ; almost ready for tears. )

TOWNSHEND (rebuking her ) — Venice, that's not like you. She is lying in that room ill almost to death.

VENICE ( turning back recklessly ) — I don't care, I don't care ! It's the truth - I hate that kind of woman !

(More calmly ; she has a reason .) What chance have I with a man against an Iris Fenwick? She knows Oh, everything ! She knows how to make love, how to let men make love to her —how to make a man feel like a god ! Married life has taught me one thing, Hilary men love feeling like gods when they're in pajamas! But girls like me can't do that we don't know how we're not brought up to know how — we don't know how to hold a man against the competition of women like Iris Fenwick - ( A pregnant pause .) ( A pregnant pause. ) Unless we have children !

TOWNSHEND ( gently but severely) -Venice, you are being very, very silly .

VENICE ( looking at him — calmly calmly)) — I am being sensible for the first time in my life. I am seeing things as they are. And what I see is that the Iris Fenwick type of woman can hold a man without having children - she's got some beastly magic ! ( Sister Virginia enters left and goes into Iris' room .) But I must have children - or there's no excuse for me in a man's life —for I've got no beastly magic ! Oh, I wish I had ! (Enter Napier and Masters left, down through center arch .) What an attractive bad woman I could make if only I knew how ! (Helplessly, turning away .) Oh, damn!

TOWNSHEND ( laying his hand on her shoulder) -

You're just tired, my dear. That's what it is.

VENICE ( turning, trying to get control of herself)

Well, what is the matter with Mrs. Fenwick ? Is it some thing serious ?

DR. MASTERS ( interrupting Townshend ) Ptomaine poisoning!

Oh, Venice turns her questioning to Napier, but there is no satisfactory answer from him, either. His replies are evasive, but his tone is pleading. Her trust in him is all he asks. Let her remember that they are friends as well as husband and wife. Let them be just friends now. " For God's sake, Venice," he pleads, " don't mistrust me. Don't ! Don't mistrust me!"

Suddenly she turns and takes him in her arms. I don't, you sweet, I don't, " she says softly. " But I think beastly things. Sometimes I suppose we all do. I've been thinking beastly things —just now. Ah, Naps,

myvery dear, will you forgive me? "

" Forgive you !" he answers, almost violently, but whispering the words, huskily. " Venice, I'm not worthy to touch you !"

They are standing very close together as the door of

Iris ' room opens. Masters and Sister Virginia come out , Masters with word that Iris is sleeping now. If

Napier could come again in the morning But before he can finish Iris herself is standing in the doorway, a little cry on her lips. Now she is out of her room standing, wild and delirious, in the archway.

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They have taken her roses and she wants them . She sees the flowers on the table and sweeps them into her

arms before the nurse can reach her. And then, with the flowers crushed to her breast she sees Napier. Now she is laughing -and sobbing. Weakly she staggers toward Napier and clasps him wildly.

NAPIER ( low, trembling) —Iris , you must get back to bed — at once please !

TOWNSHEND Iris ! For God's sake, Masters !

(Masters gives him a sign to let her be. )

IRIS ( sobbing and laughing) — Napier ! Ah it's like a gift from God you're here! How did you know I was ill ? ( Napier is trying to soothe her. His back is to Venice. ) Did you dream it ? Oh, I've had such dreams - and your face above me in the clouds all the time - looking at me, as though it were a crime to love you !

Ah my dear one, don't leave me I've been so ill , and I

want you so ! (Now she is kissing him , sobbing, laugh ing, raving wildly. Sister Virginia leans down and picks up roses. ) Conrad, tell him he mustn't go ! Tell him I'll die if he goes. Tell him - ( She sees Venice for the first time -Venice staring at her with curiously calm eyes. And Iris asks, quietly almost normally. ) Who is she ? Who is this girl? What's she staring at me for?

TOWNSHEND ( approaching and touching her ) — Iris ,you must try and --

MASTERS Now , Iris, I am going to carry you --

NAPIER ( low , feverishly) — Iris, you must be good now !

SISTER VIRGINIA — Vient, mon enfant ! ( But Iris has never taken her eyes from Venice, staring at Venice as though transfixed. Iris staring at her, pushes them away . )

IRIS —No !

VENICE ( softly, smiling comes up to Iris ) —You must go back to bed now . Quick, quick, quick !

IRIS ( throwing her head back as though to look at Venice better) – I know who you are You're Napier's pretty wife —you're pretty Venice. I saw a photograph of you once — and I said : " She has such clean eyes. They frighten me." But they don't frighten me any more. I'm too ill to be frightened of anything now.

Listen, Venice — I was talking nonsense a minute ago when I told Napier he must stay with me. I didn't

mean a word of it, not a word . I'm only very ill and when people are ill they say things they don't mean .

I'm not the least bit in love with Napier really —we're only old, old friends —

VENICE ( quietly — smiling) —Yes -playmates.

IRIS ( eagerly) — That's it - playmates — but it's you Napier's in love with, he's in love with your clean brave eyes. ( Staring at her. ) What's there to stop my kissing you if I want to very much?

VENICE ( laughing like a boy ) – You darling! ( And she kisses Iris. ) Come along now. Bed for you. ( She starts to lead Iris back center to center arch . )

IRIS ( stopping and turning to Napier) —Goodbye,

Napier- ( She moves a step; then to Venice.) It's all right, Venice. Don't you go worrying your head about Napier being in love with me—because he isn't.

( Earnestly, secretly. ) But don't let him come to see me again. Not ever again ! ( She stops, turning again to

Napier.) Goodbye — Napier. ( She is smiling -but the smile dies in a sad, weak expression. She makes weak, aimless gestures. ) Where are my roses ?

TOWNSHEND — Here they are. ( He hands them to her . )

Iris ( taking roses and holding them like a child in her arms) — He must be worthy of Venice's children ,  
mustn't he ?

VENICE ( sharply, almost a cry ) — I haven't any chil dren.

IRIS ( turns to Venice -- very old , very kind , very wise ) — You baby ! At your age ! But you'll have lots and lots of them later. ( Sobbing suddenly. ) Not like me Not like me. (And breaking down, she is taken back into her room by Venice and Sister Virginia Masters following them in . )  
( A considerable pause. Napier turns, burying his face in his hands.)

TOWNSHEND ( suddenly crossing right to Napier ) What the devil did you bring Venice here for ?

NAPIER ( turning on him almost fiercely ) — Because it was the only decent thing to do . I will not do things behind people's backs. I will not live a life of dirty lies.

TOWNSHEND ( angrily ) -You're too noble, boy — at the wrong moment.

They're gone now, all of them . And Masters is satis fied. "" Saved her life, this flareup, ” he announces, pro fessionally. “ Nothing like a flareup. Keeps my wife in good health , I can tell you . ”

The life of the convent-nursing home resumes its lies.

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The life of the convent-nursing home resumes its normal course. The night watchman is in to snuff the candles. A little French doctor, having completed his rounds, recovers his bag and goes on his way. Save for the little light burning at the side of the door to Iris' room the corridor is in darkness.

The curtain falls .

#### ACT IV

Four months later, in the library of Sutton -Marle, the Harpenden country house, Sir Maurice Harpenden ,

Hilary Townshend, and Guy De Travest, a neighbor, are awaiting the coming of Iris March. Sir Maurice has sent for her, following reports he has heard that she and Napier have decided to go away together. He has seen Napier who has confirmed the rumor, and it is Sir Maurice's conviction that Iris is responsible for the decision. She has enchanted, bewitched his son.

"All that he would say," Sir Maurice reports, "was that Iris had come for him and that they had decided to go away together tomorrow morning to South America.

Just that! His career gone, his name gone, everything.

And you say that isn't enchantment?"

Venice, it appears, has consented to this arrangement. She has no desire to hold Napier against his will. Now there is only one way to save Napier, and that is through an appeal to Iris. Sir Maurice believes that if

she can be brought face to face with exact conditions,

if she can be made to see what it will mean to Naps, to realize the devastating force of the criticism of their people, her people, the people she grew up with and whose standards of conduct were her standards in the past, she will feel differently about it. "Iris is out to destroy our sort of life," he says. "Are we going to let her?"

Down the road the approach of a car is noted. It is the yellow Hispano-Suiza. A moment later Iris enters,

unannounced. In the doorway she pauses, surveying her would-be inquisitors before they see her.

"Messieurs, a lady has called about her morals!" she announces, gaily.

"Optimist, Iris," De Travest answers. "We've just been discussing the fact that you haven't any."

There is a measured formality in the greetings, though it does not relieve the situation of its tenseness. It was good of Iris to come, Sir Maurice admits, but he knew she would. She has always been a "gallant gentleman."

"And is that why I have always been at such a disadvantage with you, Sir Maurice?" she queries, banteringly. Quietly, methodically, defiantly, she demands their reasons for sending for her.

They, her old friends, have sent for her, Sir Maurice explains, that as civilized people, they may talk things over in a civilized manner. And to ask her not to ruin Napier's life. Not only ruin his career, but his life, his happiness

more the She resents the implication, resents even suggestion that she will soon tire of Napier, as she has tired of other men. If that were true wouldn't she have tired of him before this? Let them remember that she has loved Napier ever since they were babies.

It is true, she admits, that she had sent Napier away and that she had promised Venice never to see him again.

It is true that she had not kept that promise. Why?

Because she wanted some happiness. Because she grew tired of not being happy.

Defiantly, boldly, she admits the truth of her illness in Paris. If they are to judge her, let them have all the evidence. She was ill of septic poisoning following the birth of a child, and Napier was the father of that child.

"You liar," shouts Sir Maurice, angrily. "You dare to say that of my son?"

IRIS (dangerously reasonable) - But I wasn't saying it as anything against him. I love him for it !  
TOWNSHEND (turning to her - disapproving - angry)

- Need you have gone as far as this, Iris ? Sir Maurice is an old man.

IRIS ( she has the whip hand —she is using it ) — Then to be told the truth will be a nice change for him . By the way, Napier knows nothing at all about it . Nothing at all. And Sir Maurice, I shouldn't tell him if I were you -- for nothing will bind Napier to me more securely than if he hears that I was dying of a child of his you do see that , don't you ! He must never, never know !

DE TRAVEST ( annoyed at her unreasonable attitude )

- But if you say it would bind him to you

IRIS (suddenly bitter ) — But that's just it ! I don't want Napier like that — I couldn't bear to have him come to me because he thought he had to !

DE TRAVEST (desperately ) — But my dear Iris —

SIR MAURICE ( he is now ready to strike back ) --- Never mind, Guy ! ( De Travest sits on table right, back to audience; he loathes the whole business .) Iris, we have known you all your life. I think you had forgotten that. That's why I wanted you to come here tonight. I wanted to show you us. This isn't an ordinary elopement. Napier's and yours -

IRIS (with a suppressed cry ) - Ordinary ? It's miraculous !

SIR MAURICE (deliberately) — It's not an elopement. It's a stab in the back.

IRIS ( viciously ) —Maurice, am I stabbing you in the back by coming here to face you tonight ?

SIR MAURICE — Yes! ( Hilary tries to calm him . Sir Maurice waves him away. He sits on sofa watching the old man closely. Sir Maurice speaks in deliberate staccato.) You were always a strange, unfrightened girl, but the stab in the back is made. You're stabbing us, your people, in the back. Venice's people aren't in this as we But you are of us. I think you have forgotten that on your travels. I'm not trying to beg Napier from you. I'm not talking of him as my son, my only son. I've taken great pride in his career. I haven't married

again for his sake -- but let all that go ! I'm talking of Napier now as one of us here, the us you were born into, the us from which you have outlawed yourself.

Everyone of us in this room , and Napier, were born within fifty miles of here. We are of this soil , of this air, of this England which is still our England. And you've decided that you'll break into our lives and break up our lives ? For this is not only the end of Napier's career - it's to all purposes the end of my life.

IRIS ( she is brittle - little things snap inside her. Something snapped with his words) —Maurice, you said you weren't going to beg him from me!

SIR MAURICE (the magnificent exponent of caste) Damn it, girl. This is evil. There aren't any words to describe what we think of a woman who comes between a man and his wife. This isn't just your business and Napier's. This strikes at the roots of our life. You and we just don't seem to think in the same language.

We think in English.

IRIS ( bitterly — regretfully . It is just a breath) – I think in English , too- unfortunately for me.

SIR MAURICE (angrily) - Oh come, Iris !

IRIS ( this almost to herself. She is trying to see what she really does mean. She is a little afraid ) -- Yes.

You said a moment ago that I seemed to have come by an entirely different set of ideas from yours. I haven't. I wish I had. One can't get rid of traditions and prejudices as easily as one can of friends

. One can be out lawed by decent people and yet still go on having the same ideas as decent people. It's just because I've led such a different life from yours for the past twelve years without coming by a different set of ideas that I've had twelve years' unhappiness. ( A pause .)

SIR MAURICE ( suddenly not quite a gentleman )

—You have done exactly as you pleased all these years. If you've been unhappy , can you but your self ?

IRIS

( she has found herself again; she again holds the whip ) — Yes, I can put the blame on just three words,

Sir Maurice Harpenden.

(A pause.)

Sir MAURICE ( turning her reply with his contempt) -- That boy and girl love !

IRIS (dreaming)

– You mustn't despise that boy and girl love. I know it isn't supposed to last. But Napier's and mine has SIR MAURICE ( to De Travest ; again he has no resort but vulgarity) Who can think of love in connection with Iris Fenwick !

IRIS

( this throws the game into her hands. Suddenly her emotion begins to control her ) —Look into my eyes,

blame anyone Maurice ! Look into my eyes ! You daren't say that

my love for Napier isn't the only thing in this room made in the image of God. You talk to me of our Eng land , of us. (Suddenly things begin to snap inside her things that have been twisted for a very long time.

She slaps the cards down, advancing towards Sir Maurice . Her hatred is greater than anything at the mo ment. ) – I despise our England ! I despise us ! We are shams, with patrician faces and peasant minds. You

want to bully me with our traditions. May God forgive you the sins committed in their name and me for ever having believed in them !

TOWNSHEND ( uncomfortably ) — Steady, Iris.

IRIS ( with fire) — Yes ! You want Napier to be a success . I want him to be a failure. The kind of success you respect is like a murky sponge wiping out the lines of a man's character.

She faces them calmly, awaiting the next attack. Sir Maurice, desperate and reckless now, denies her charges against him. How dare she put the blame of her unhappiness on him. All he did was to part a girl and a boy.

Was it he who murdered Boy Fenwick ?

Now the others come to her defense. That is carrying matters too far. Sir Maurice owes Iris an apology,

which he weakly admits. He was carried away, he says.

The charge of murder was too strong.



But he has not given up. As Iris, hurt and weary turns away, he faces her again. She says she loves Napier. Others may believe her. He doesn't. He can only see the ruin she has made of Nap's life. Can " love "

be held responsible for that ? What of the other men she has loved ? Two years after her parting with Napier she married Boy Fenwick. And there must have been others before him. Had she not herself confessed that Fenwick died for " purity ? "

Before she can answer Napier appears in the doorway.

He hears his father's question and advances toward him wildly, and in rage.

" For vice, sir !" he half shouts, slamming his hat down upon the table. " That was why Boy Fenwick died !"

Startled, they turn to Napier and try to check him, Iris more eagerly than the rest. But he will not be

checked. He has come to protect Iris from these men,

even though he had promised her not to interfere. And Venice has come with him. She is out in the car now.

Venice understands.

IRIS ( pleading ) - Napier, come ! You've no idea

Venice understands.

IRIS ( pleading ) - Napier, come ! You've no idea what you are saying.

NAPIER ( determined ) —Yes, I have, Iris. But it can't - it can't go on forever, this slandering of you.

IRIS ( She sees the end. It will be ignominious to justify herself before Sir Maurice - her hatred is too strong ) —But, Napier, you promised.

NAPIER (wildly ) — I don't care, Iris, I'm awfully tired of all these pretences.

SIR MAURICE ( turning away in disgust and heart broken. He has lost. He had nearly won ) -- I've

already apologized to Iris for bringing Boy's death against her.

NAPIER —And the first thing I hear as I come into this room is the man I call my father chucking that stone at her.

IRIS (wildly ) — But, Napier, don't you see it's me you're hurting ! You're hurting me, my dear !

NAPIER (digging at his father ) — Hilary, I know it wasn't your idea or Guy's, to get Iris down here and sling that mud at her. TOWNSHEND and DE TRAVEST — But , my dear boy, no one's been slinging any mud !

SIR MAURICE ( turning on Napier terrific. The father who has lost his son) — It was mine! I have

gambled —for your future! —and I have lost. I'm not sorry I have tried . I'm sorry I have lost. You may be

as angry with me as you like —but go !

IRIS —Come, Napier, come! ( A breath. She has no voice . )

NAPIER ( suddenly he has found courage ) — I will not go ! You've always gambled for my future, sir. Years ago you sacrificed my love for Iris for what you thought ought to be my future, my career, my name and all I can say is , God damn future - career, and name, if they can't bring a man enough to respect himself.

TOWNSHEND - Napier !

NAPIER I think you ought to apologize to Iris. ( A long pause.)

SIR MAURICE ( his hatred for Iris overshadows his feeling for his son. For a moment his emotion is too great to allow speech ) - Get out!

NAPIER (he has courage now but it is not the courage Iris wants - like her decency) — I'm damned if I

get out before settling this Boy Fenwick business once and for all .

IRIS ( she sees the end ) Napier, you mustn't — you don't know what you are doing.

NAPIER ( there is no stopping him ) —Iris spread that lie about Fenwick dying for purity, because she didn't care what happened to her, and she wanted Gerald to keep his tin -god hero. It was about all that stood between him and suicide, anyway. Oh yes, Boy died for purity all right. He was mad with love for Iris and when she surprised him by saying she would marry him, instead of the cad admitting he couldn't, he took her while he had the chance, hoping to put it right on

( Iris sinks into chair center back of table. ) Boy had picked up some beastly woman before Iris suddenly accepted him and caught about the foulest disease a man can have.

SIR MAURICE -What !

DE TRAVEST -TOWNSHEND -My God !

NAPIER (he backs away. He is more quiet, but not less bitter ) — Yes ! Then , on the first night of their

honeymoon, he had to tell her. I suppose he thought she loved him enough to stand the shock — but when he saw the disgust and horror on her face well, he was always an unbalanced devil, and he just chucked himself out. That's your Boy Fenwick ! That's Iris ! ( Turns. )

Come, we'll go now. ( He picks up hat and goes to window left back . He is tired , stands wearily waiting for her. ) ( A long pause . )

IRIS (she has been humiliated . Her pride is greater than her love. She is saying her own requiem ) —Yes,

let's go. You've taken from me the only gracious thing I've ever done in my life. ( She tears card and tosses the pieces on the table.) Yes, it's time to go.

They are gone. There is an uncomfortable silence. The men move about uncomfortably. Then a door opens

and Venice stands before them , white of face, “ terribly restrained.” They go to her and help her into a chair. Now she is weeping hysterically, her control of her nerves gone. She has seen Napier and Iris getting into Iris' car. “ God, I hope I've done right in letting him go, ” she sobs. “ She loves him so much. ”

They are quieting her when suddenly Napier “ lunges into the room, white, gaunt, desperate. ” They try to stop him , but he puts them aside.

NAPIER ( accusing, wild , cruel) —I thought you were my friend, Venice. I was wrong.

TOWNSHEND (suddenly afraid) —Where's Iris ?

NAPIER ( absently) — She's gone. ( Then again accusing ) - Iris sent me back !

VENICE (desperately ) —Why ?

NAPIER — God knows I have no opinion of myself but I am not quite such a blackguard as to leave you

when - ( De Travest seeing Townshend exit, goes up into window left back . )

VENICE ( wildly, fearfully ) -Naps, I don't know what you are talking about. Why are you looking at me like that ?

NAPIER —My God, Venice, what do you think I am !

Do you think I could leave you when you are going to have a child. You told Iris about it this morning and made her swear not to tell me - but at the last moment, she broke down and

VENICE ( desperately -sadly ) -- But it's a lie! She just made it up — I'm not having a child . It's a lie.

Don't you see what she's done, Naps? Don't you see, my poor sweet ? She's just sent you back to me because she suddenly realized that you weren't worthy of the kind of love she had to give. You cared whether we respected her or not. You couldn't give her enough, my poor sweet Naps.

DE TRAVEST (he is watching a suicide and cannot move to help) - Iris , good God! ( Napier, Venice and Sir Maurice rush to window left back . )

SIR MAURICE — What is it ? (Napier sees. The truth and horror sweep over him. He cannot even stand. He sinks into chair center. )

DE TRAVEST (horrified ) -She's driving her car right at it — the tree, Harrods the headlights are--

VENICE ( a scream ) - Iris, please !

ALL —My God ! (De Travest rushes of left. Sir Maurice turns away weakly. Venice leans against arch . )

VENICE (dead -expressionless) --- Dear God! Straight against that huge tree !

NAPIER (desperate — weak - agonized ) — It must have been an accident

VENICE ( it is a sharp, cutting reply )) - Don't be a coward, Naps. ( Then with more weariness but still a

cold rebuke to Napier.) It wasn't an accident. The only accident that ever happened to Iris was to be born into this world. ( Napier suddenly realizes the truth — what it means. He lets out a weak, agonized cry, and staggers to his feet. Suddenly Venice too realizes the agony for him — and she loves him. She rushes for ward and takes him in her arms, tears in her voice.)

Oh no, Napier, no ! Naps, I must come with you now. We must be together now. Or else we may hate each other. And, oh dearest, we mustn't hate each other.

The curtain falls

END

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Sunflowers at Ukrainian Folk Museum, 2018

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